ARMAND BARBAULT

GOLD OF A THOUSAND MORNINGS

Translated from the French by

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PREFACE

It is high time that activities such as astrology and alchemy, which are wrongly termed 'occult', provoked some reaction other than the customary blind acceptance or sarcasm. I feel it is necessary to point out to those deep thinkers who have shed all their illusions without having gained anything else in the process, that to denounce the charlatanism of certain 'seers' or the naïve attitude of 'believers' is not a sufficient investigation of these secular disciplines. One wishes that orthodox scholars would bring to bear judgements based on practical knowledge and would at the very least agree to learn the rules of the game. Instead, they oppose on principle arts of which they have no knowledge and about which they fabricate quite fantastic ideas. When several industrialists, often les short-sighted than scholars, heard of the results which Armand Barbault had achieved after fifteen years' work on what Paracelsus calls potable gold, they expressed at least an impartial sort of curiosity. Some of them became really enthusiastic, for as industrialists they are obliged by the laws of competition to be always on the look-out for new ideas. Faced with this liquor which had taken on the very colour of gold and which had failed to respond to normal methods of analysis, it was they and not the alchemist himself who were moved to speak of *a new state of matter*, endowed with strange, possibly very fundamental properties.

Armand Barbault began as an engineer with the Technical Radio Company and then worked in the biological department of the Armand Carrel Institute. He possesses

all the qualities necessary for laboratory research. Above all, though, he belongs to the earth and is in contact with the forces of nature. Those who have been fortunate enough to follow his work in astrology will be aware how he refers everything back to the *natural* foundations of the art. For him, the highly analytic and detailed aspects of science are fused with that unity and spontaneity of vision which is the mark of real knowledge.

In the late 1940's Armand Barbault could, had he so wanted, have become a fashionable astrologer. His astrological handbook, published in 1952, carried great weight. Society ladies and politicians sought him out, placed their trust in him and threatened to drag him into the facile existence inherent in this approach to the art. The course of his life was completey changed when, after the war, he met his second wife. This man, who led an extremely comfortable urban existence, suddenly gave it all up and went to live in the country. The decision which he took to devote his life to alchemy was no free, deliberate choice but rather was in obedience to a call, maybe even a command, which was transmitted by the woman. Suddenly, a life which had threatened to become banal became a *destiny*. This role of the woman in alchemy is traditional and fundamental. She is the guide and the channel for forces which we must call superior since we do not have them at our command: rather, they have us at their command. No training prepares us better than astrology for this obedience, for it shows the reason why.

For Armand Barbault there followed a dozen years of tentative yet strenuous work. Then, at the beginning of the 1960's, came the first results, since confirmed. In this book, written by Barbault once the initial excitement of his discoveries had subsided, the reader will immediately feel himself projected into another world. It is a world of perpetual morning. The elements which compose it are the rising sun, dew and sap. In it one touches every blade of grass with religious respect. It is, too, a world of obscure

forces in earth and sky, brought together in a kind of uneasy truce and which become almost tangible and familiar. From them, man seems to expect some unknown form of sacrament. Finally, the thousandth morning arrives and the gold yields up its soul.

Perhaps it is this profound and effective sort of poetry which sustained the seeker over a twenty-year period. However, this is an insufficient explanation; this book is vital for precise practical and scientific reasons. The poetry is no more than a bonus. I do not consider it rash to say that this book quite possibly opens new paths for medicine, or rather it reopens long forgotten ones. I cannot be more assertive, since I have no expertise of my own and hence no real right to speak. I have, though, treated myself with the drops of potable gold over a two-year period, with beneficial results. The one thing above all others that I want to draw to public attention at this time is that this is the first book ever about alchemy *which says it all* and does not seek to drown the subject in obscurity or in secrecy. Armand Barbault tells all he knows and explains everything he does, even, and indeed above all, when he refers to highly symbolic ancient texts. These are thereby illumined in new and direct fashion. 'To hide things is the glory of God, to find them is the glory of man' says the Book of Proverbs. But what of the famous vow of secrecy which, according to all the ancient texts, is imposed on the seeker and the accompanying threat to the profaner of the secret? There is nothing more deceptive than the sort of treatise on the occult whose author gives us to understand that he can reveal only a small part of what he knows, since his reader is unworthy to receive such knowledge. One feels like replying 'Why did you write the book, then? Practise your secret science in secret and don't keep talking to us about it.' One is almost tempted to quote the old saying 'He who can, does, he who can't, teaches.' It seems to me that this obscure secret, which one is obliged to keep because of an equally obscure decree, is

based on a misunderstanding. The spirit of our age is that of Faust, who would accept no prohibition and took his risks all across the board. Indeed, what wise man is there on whom the hint of unsanctioned danger does not act as a powerful spur? In fact the best defences are those inherent in the difficulty of the task itself.

When Armand Barbault succeeded in obtaining his first tincture in the early 1960's, he sent them for analysis to well-equipped pharmaceutical laboratories. After experiments which proved conclusive, the chemists asked how one might manufacture industrial quantities of the tincture, i.e. large quantities, cheaply produced. To the laboratory researchers, twelve long years of preparation of the 'first matter', constant technical sleight of hand, the need for the seeker to be up before dawn for months on end to gather dew from the meadows or young plants swollen with sap, all the trial and error, the sheer volume of labour, seemed not only unprofitable in the financial sense, but also a sheer waste of time. Could one not simplify, speed up, synthesise? Vain hope. Not only could the liquor not be analysed, it could not be compared with anything even remotely similar. Yet Armand Barbault hid nothing. One may, during the first stage of its preparation, find the alchemist's mysterious *materia prima* almost anywhere. One has only to take, at random, a sample of clean, healthy soil. Completely at random? Perhaps not. Definitely not any old time and any old place. Two different orders of conditions converge here, neither of which can be measured quantitatively and so escape the clutches of ordinary, experimental science. The first depends on the inspiration of the alchemist, or, if one prefers, on his intuition; better still, on the instructions he receives. Tradition is firm on this point. The future is acted upon more than he himself acts. Very often he is guided by his wife, perhaps in dreams, perhaps in a series of paranormal perceptions in which she, in a medium-like trance, perceives things more or less intensely in terms of images.

Scholars see this as a hangover from the naïve and primitive animist age and treat it as an unfortunate incursion of magic into today's world. Let us leave to more enlightened times the task of contrasting the literal interpretation of such 'revelations' with their symbolic meaning, thereby doing justice to the phenomenon of 'seeing'. We cannot miss this opportunity of helping in a powerful return to a more subjective approach to the so-called human sciences. These are, in fact, governed by mathematics and are drained of their vitality by a structuralism which, in other aspects, is highly effective. For the time being, we repeat simply that in Armand Barbault's case his wife played the important role laid down for her by tradition.

The second order of conditions in fact underlines the necessary pre-eminence of subjectivity which we have already mentioned. The factor which really governed Armand Barbault's work was the configuration of the planets at any given moment. When the stars were especially favourable he chose the spot from which he would take his First Matter. The moment for this was chosen in the same way. Time and place were unique and valid only for that particular individual. The alchemist's frame of reference was his astrological birth chart and the aspects prevalent at this moment which caused the focus of cosmic forces on his work. There, truly, are conjunctions and aspects which will never be exactly reproduced. Of course this does not mean that other alchemists, working at different times and in different places, did not encounter equally propitious and inspiring conditions. What it does mean is that this 'science' is really an art which is not susceptible to objective experiment or banal repetition.

This leads me to a point which I think it is essential to grasp if one wants to understand the differences between chemistry and alchemy. The chemist confidently repeats his experiments at will. He is master of his data, which is all measurable. Additionally, in any one experiment he is

only dealing with a small, finite number of variables. What these are is precisely known; they are susceptible to what Descartes calls *entire* enumeration, i.e. it is complete. However, it must be admitted that no experiment can be devised which deals with a given, closed number of variables. Every experiment is grounded in the close-grained and indivisible texture of universal experience. There will always be an infinite, or better, an unknown number of parameters. The known facts are never entirely enumerable; the laws of physics and chemistry remain only approximate, always open to revision and improvement, as previously unknown or ignored variables are incorporated.

There is, for example, no ideal crucible, no crucible so perfectly sealed and protected that it can be considered a closed system, a unit absolutely isolated from the rest of the universe. Are we aware of every action which may be exerted by a distant planet or star, every radiation, every means of energy exchange at work in the world? It would be unscientific to presume so. For that matter, do we even know how to locate, isolate and measure our own telepathic influences, influences which American and Russian scientists are beginning to take extremely seriously, yet which are doubtless only a minute part of the telekinetic spectrum? Nevertheless, it is the business and indeed the essence of science to attach the label scientific only to those phenomena for which the importance of certain variables allows one to consider the rest, in all their variety, as infinitely small, without real significance and hence able to be ignored. It goes without saying that this is only because the variables considered by science are measurable, i.e. reducible to quantities which can always be compared with one another in the knowledge that anything which one ignores or rejects is 'too small' to distort the phenomenon.

A typical example concerns the ranging tables used by the artillery. In calculating a particular shot trajectory, the gunner evidently does not take into account an enormous number of more or less subtle secondary variables.

To take the example to its absurd limits, he ignores the attraction exerted on the shell by the distant planets. As a result, each shot deviates from the ideal, which it would only be possible to gauge using the variables which are ignored. All the shots fall around the objective in what is called the bracket. This is as narrow as possible, but it exists nonetheless.

Nothing of this sort exists in alchemy. Here, phenomena escape measures of quantity more often than not; nor can any one variable be considered infinitely small compared with the others. Everything, or almost everything, is measured not quantitatively but qualitatively and so the marginal becomes the essential. The forces in play are not identified and the smallest depletion of any one of them can side-track the whole process. Success or failure can never be foreseen. Hence the stress which tradition places on the *qualification* of the operator. It is said that he is the channel by which cosmic forces reach the work, so he must provide these forces with a free passage. This is identified as a sort of absolute transparence, with which are associated wisdom, detachment and disinterest, necessary conditions for the freedom and effectiveness of the spirit.

In fact I think that to speak of the special qualification of the would-be adept and the *infinity* of conditions in alchemy is one and the same thing. Precisely because the process obeys an infinite number of conditions, the operator must be a channel entirely free of the earthly contingencies which enslave the average man, so making him incapable of synthesising and of true vision.

Such is the nature of the world of alchemy, a world full of fascination yet very hard to pin down. Nature, however, places these forces which it is so hard to measure before our very eyes, the simplest yet the most universal of effects. Armand Barbault's book contains highly penetrating observations on the nature of dew and the sap of plants. These are essential ingredients of his operations, natural

receptacles for forces which, for want of a better word, we call etheric. They are forces which vary according to hour, day and season. For their capture they demand precautions which border on ritual and on an almost religious state of mind. In these areas advanced science has now begun to confirm the teachings of the ancients. For example, in the January 1969 issue of the English magazine *Endeavour* you will find precise information on the differing rate of flow and variable composition of sap at different times of the day. The concentration of forces is at maximum just before sunrise. These statements and the proof that movement of sap in the ducts or fibres of planets takes place by capillary action have been arrived at after much patient observation and measurement. These will obviously continue and increase, though they will never entirely solve the problem. In general, the limits of modern science are expanded further and further by its own observations; it is less and less able to fall back on the facile attitude of denying what it does not understand. That we are entering a revolutionary period is easily enough said, of course. But even yesterday, science flatly denied the existence of what it termed 'mystery'. Today, it is obliged to turn the mystery into an enigma and to grapple with it. Again, it is easily said, but in fifty years' time a strictly negative attitude to astrology will be unthinkable, as unlikely as the literal application to the phenomena of biology of the second law of thermodynamics today. And this in spite of all that scientific sectarianism still affirmed barely thirty years ago.

Alchemy seeks to salvage the hidden properties of these cosmic forces en bloc and orthodox science is obliged at least to admit their existence, even if it is as yet unable to analyse, to name and to list the components of them. If I were an optimist, I would say that in this respect chemistry and alchemy, the profane science and the sacred science, were converging. Maybe they are converging but they will not become identical. There will always be an unbridge-

able gap between the two disciplines. This is so for the simple and self-evident reason that infinity will never be exhausted by a series of finite operations. Nevertheless, alchemy and indeed the whole field of cosmic forces can and must play the role of a marvellous stimulant. In Michel Gauquelin's book on astrology (published in France by Planète) there is a long and passionate account of this science born of cosmic influence, as founded by scholars such as Tchijewsky, Takata and Piccardi. The story of the researches of Giorgio Piccardi, director of the Institute of Physical Chemistry at the University of Florence, is a marvellous intellectual adventure in its own right. It started from a little, almost insignificant fact concerned with the descaling of boilers by means of what is called *activated water*. This phenomenon was not constant; sometimes it happened, sometimes it didn't. It varied with the occasion, though all 'scientific' conditions appeared identical. Piccardi was obliged to attribute these variations to changes of *space* in his set-up. This in turn led, incidentally, to many other inexplicable phenomena. To speak of *activation of* space gets one decidedly nowhere. It is simply a picturesque and handy term, yet one which is heard more and more often. I first encountered it in the description of the patent taken out in 1950 by the Russian engineer Sprink, who runs a cement-manufacturing company in France. In it, he states that the creation of an electric field nearby greatly speeds up reactions inside his ovens. He is unable to explain why. In the same context, one sees that the cosmos changes the structure of water which, it would seem, is thus linked to the movement of the earth through its connection with the galaxy and its force field. Perhaps the most extraordinary observation is that made by the Japanese doctor Maki Takata. Testing the albumen in blood serum, he recorded complete upset of his results in January 1938, a kind of panic of the human blood. Today, there are established connections between human blood and extra-terrestrial forces. These are global

effects which we are by no means in control of. They destroy man's pretensions to be able both to isolate a phenomenon and to isolate himself. Instead, they expose us to a world of vertiginous heights, a world which seizes the seeker with desire and with trembling, two equally sacred emotions.

My sole aim in writing this preface is to help Armand Barbault find his Takata or his Piccardi, someone who will experiment systematically and objectively with his elixir. In this way the gulf between chemistry and alchemy will be bridged. At the end of the book will be found a brief resumé of the tests carried out according to the method of Professor Theodor Schwenk, a member of the anthroposophical movement founded by Rudolf Steiner. Researchers from this movement are almost certainly the most readily disposed to understand the labours of men like Armand Barbault and the most likely to be able to expand them. In many respects they are themselves pioneers, though basing their work on firmly established principles. Studying the problem of water, without doubt the most complex and paradoxical fluid which the ordinary doctor has to deal with, Theodor Schwenk works from the idea that the internal surfaces formed in water which is in motion are nothing short of entry point for cosmic or etheric forces. Thus the study of these forces can yield precious information on the ability or otherwise of a given sample of water to receive and broadcast these forces. So if one wants to discover the 'value' of some water, one has only to photograph the complex 'forms' which result when a drop of that water falls into a control liquid. The greater the charge of cosmic energy in a sample of water, the richer and more harmonious the forms which it yields.

The photographs of Armand Barbault's liquor reveal magnificent multi-petalled flowers, quite different from the impoverished patterns issuing from the dead water normally supplied as human drinking water. Here, then, is one way in which the constancy of the elixir can be

checked. There will doubtless be many others. I do not think that it is asking too much to hope for fair, objective tests from biologists and doctors, so that the rebirth of spagiric medicine may quite simply be a milestone for all science.

Raymond Abellio

ONE

THE ALCHEMIST'S ELIXIR FOR LONG LIFE

The story of a twentieth-century alchemist who has succeeded, after twenty years' research, in reconstituting the Golden Elixir of the First Degree, so opening the way to anti-atomic medicine in the future.

The essential preoccupation of the wise men of old was to discover and capture the universal energies surrounding them. Above all they aimed at preparing a *universal medicine* which prolonged life-span by maintaining the body in good health. This allowed groups treated with it to accomplish special tasks entrusted to them, thanks to the enhanced experience they were thus able to amass.

We may legitimately postulate that initiates of other ages possessing knowledge which has now partly vanished, had access to the secret of continuing youth.

There are many legends about such an *elixir of long life*. Nearer our own time, the potable gold of the alchemists was reputed to possess marvellous healing properties. It was said to be effective against the most tenacious illnesses, regenerating the organism and assuring the user of a ripe old age.

Today we know nothing of all this. Civilisation, doubtless, offers certain compensations. Previously unknown

medical and surgical techniques fight disease with great effectiveness. Yet the turmoil of modern life, the pollution of air and ocean, the spread of radiation all bear and nourish new diseases against which we are all too often helpless. For this reason many researchers consider that we need to lay the foundations of a new kind of medicine, one drawing inspiration from the most ancient ideas. This is the true path, the path which this book sets out to describe.

Initial observations and essential analogies

To grasp the importance of the subject, one needs to be a diligent observer of nature, able to give attention to the smaller details of natural phenomena when they appear to obey laws unknown to or even flatly contradictory to the physical laws we take for granted. In fact we are surrounded by energies which are invisible to us. These are the universal etheric or fluidic forces which take part in the life processes of plants and animals. Their laws are in no way the laws of gravity. Look at plants or creepers as they raise their flexible, sap-filled stems into the spring sky. See how the buds on the rose bushes in your garden firm and swell. The fragile supporting stem does not seem aware of this excess weight. Is one not led to think that gravity has lost its power? It seems as if the gap which fills the stems is under pressure from some invisible pump hidden deep in the roots, keeping the stem at its customary degree of rigidity. But try pulling up a rose bush in order to transplant it. You will be surprised to find that, during the short time the plant is out of the earth, the compression effect completely ceases. The stems bend under the weight of the buds, straightening up again only several days after replanting. Further, you may notice that this straightening-up process does not happen progressively but is most marked at sunrise. The stems then tend to wilt again dur-

ing the day. In this way you will have been shown that the invisible life forces which operate in the reverse manner to gravity are more in evidence in the morning than at night.

It was on observations such as these that the wise men of old built a large part of their knowledge. The invisible forces, whose action on a rose bush has just been demonstrated, act similarly on the whole vegetable kingdom. They achieve their most powerful effects in the spring and at daybreak. They act in exactly the same manner on human beings, too. Look at a child running, jumping or simply walking along. As the stem does not feel the weight of the buds it supports, so the child seems not to experience the weight of its body. An old man, on the other hand, proceeds slowly and deliberately. His tread is heavy, his head withdrawn into his shoulders, as if with age the physical deadweight of the body has gained the upper hand. Suppose one could find a way of capturing these life forces, of condensing and encapsulating them in a scientific preparation. The man to whom such a preparation was given could, one imagines, regenerate his entire organism and probably prolong his life considerably. This was the idea in the minds of the wise men as they researched into the Universal Medicine or Elixir of Long Life.

There is another phenomenon, much stranger than the first, which is of enormous interest. One may observe it in a field of wheat on a fine, clear spring morning. It is the phenomenon of the dewdrop. At dawn, before the temperature has risen, one can see humidity rising out of the ground and on up the blades of grass to form marvellous drops of dew at the tips. These evaporate at sunrise and produce a covering of mist. Here, again, gravity seems to have been overcome. Dew behaves in a fashion diametrically opposed to rain whose drops *fall* on condensation. Dew, like sap in plants, possesses special properties. The ancient spagirists made use of both of them in their concoctions which were designed to capture universal energies.

We will return repeatedly to these matters in the course of this book. It was important to show from the outset why the Tradition has paid so much attention to the preparations which will now be described.

The Dawn of the Magicians begins at daybreak on a Spring morning

The ancients were bent on capturing the life forces which they sensed in young plants swollen with spring sap. They also researched ways of producing a hermetic preparation which would condense these forces and make them assimilable by the human body. The body, thus plugged in to sources necessary for its balanced functioning, would be able effectively to combat decay.

At this point, then, they sought a 'First Matter' capable of preserving these life forces. But at the same time it was necessary to find a way of preserving plants exactly as they were when picked at daybreak, in order to ensure conservation of the most subtle elements. To this end, plants were kept in containers filled with fresh dew, gathered in its turn at daybreak. Many ancient texts report such general techniques. I refer to them in a previous book published in 1948.

On the other hand, the alchemists remain silent when it comes to designating the First Matter whose unique nature they all recognise. It is known that it condenses the life forces encapsulated in its centre and 'fixes' them during a slow and progressive process which results in the metamorphosis of the matter itself. It now becomes the Major Leaven, which has the property of opening metals, separating the richest and most subtle part from the material remainder. It is this subtle part which, once extracted, is suitable for the preparation of hermetic remedies. For a long time I, in common with many others, thought that it was possible, given plants, sap and dew, to produce a stable

and effective elixir. I thought, too, that it was possible to proceed in a similar way with regard to the mineral kingdom. It never entered my head that it was necessary to combine vegetable with mineral. But it is, for the First Matter is a whole containing all those living elements capable of evolution and dependent on the processes to which the adept subjects them. It was only after having filled numerous vessels with fresh plants steeped in dew and having sealed them hermetically that, thanks to inspiration and to the guides which accompanied me on all these spiritual labours, I was led to seek out a new substance to act in a supporting capacity. The matter thus becomes what the ancients called the Philosopher's Peat. All the characteristics of this substance, its choice, preparation and acquisition, will be described in a separate chapter. For now it is enough to say that it was extracted from the earth at a depth of approximately ten centimetres and was then mixed with the contents of the vessels when they had been subjected to the gentle fire of the first coction.

This may all seem simple and logical but the truth was much more complex. The different operations, in all their range and detail, had to coincide with certain natural processes, to coordinate themselves according to a strict system and finally to take a perfectly predetermined path. Once I possessed the First Matter and the sealed vessels containing green plants, sap and dew, I had to imagine in what way the ancients brought about the transformation of the Peat so that it evolved and continually renewed its capacity for accumulating the life forces, as if nourished by them. I had also to observe its successive metamorphoses and to perpetuate them as many times as was necessary for the Peat to evolve in conformity with the traditional hermetic process. I watched it take on little by little the required black colour, becoming tainted at its lowest point and then changing to the Absolute Black. Only having succeeded in all this can one turn one's attention to Incineration. By this process the Peat, having attained its first perfection,

becomes the Major Leaven. The Major Leaven is a saline powder which contains all the salts originating in the vegetable substances whose combustible parts have disappeared during incineration. The salts, liberated by this separation of compounds, contain the life forces. These are imprisoned from now on and cannot be reclaimed by nature. The First Matter was impregnated with them during the different preparations. With regard to this, it is necessary to understand fully the complementary but opposite roles of sap and of dew. These two liquids are poles apart. Sap nourishes the matter; dew, on the other hand, 'burns' it. Dew should in some ways be considered the excrement of the plant since it is exuded from it. It acts on the First Matter in rather the same way that urine helps in the disintegration of a dung-heap, a vital stage in the enriching of dung.

It should not, however, be thought that this metamorphosis takes place rapidly. Though I started impregnating plants with dew in 1948, it was not until 1960 that the Matter reached maturity.

For twelve consecutive years I had continually to repeat the same processes, adding together plants, sap and dew, then waiting for nature to accomplish her work of putrefaction. Finally the Matter had to be dried at a temperature never in excess of 40°C. I was then ready to begin again. My continual aim was to enrich the First Matter. It had to nourish itself on vegetable substances to maintain the life forces in it. These had been concentrated and fixed in the salts when, at the height of disintegration, the separation of mixtures took place. This process constitutes one of the secrets of the spagirists.*

During their visits, some of my friends saw the alambic

* Spagiric, spagirist: these words are formed from the conjunction of two Greek roots, 'span' to extract or uproot and 'ageirein' to gather together, and were doubtless coined by Paracelsus. They characterise the two opposed yet complementary activities of alchemy (solve and coagula).

operating in the open air. Others were curious enough to come at daybreak and see how the plants and dew were gathered. Few believed that I would ever succeed in my task and were reinforced in their doubt by the fact that the results from one year to the next were minimal. Yet however little the progress made, it was sufficient to arouse enthusiasm and prompt the continuing of operations just as long as was necessary to obtain the sought-after perfection. It is quite obvious that spiritual forces were involved here. Their presence was indeed continually felt and, as long as one persevered, they showed the way to success. Remember that, up till now, no hermetic or alchemical work inherited from the ancients has given detail of the modus operandi. The silence is even more complete when it comes to indicating the exact nature of the First Matter, or to describing the process needed to capture the etheric and universal energies which, once held in this substance, will allow the required solvent to be obtained.

For twelve years I worked towards the state of Absolute Black, when the First Matter crumbles like powder. Having once obtained Matter in this state, with white particles beginning to make their appearance at the end of the drying process, I decided to add some Philosopher's Peat to the Major Leaven. This operation demanded total incineration of a complete redness, so that all combustible matter might be reduced to ash. The separation of compounds allows the life forces imprisoned in the plants, the sap and the dew to become fixed in the salts. These accumulate as ash at the bottom of the crucible. It is said that at this stage the living particles no longer fear the fire but on the contrary settle willingly in the salts, thereby acquiring the power to separate the soul of the metal from its physical matrix. The medicine we seek is composed of this metallic soul.

Having obtained this power enriched with salts and other extremely active particles, I proceeded in the following way with the preparation of the First Medicine: into a

glass tube sealed at one end I put a few cubic centimetres of the new powder to which I added a few grammes of powdered gold. I then distilled dew until it rose 10 to 15 mm above the mass of aurified ashes. Next, I hermetically sealed the open end of the tube, in order to carry out the coction in a closed vessel. When exposed to progressive, yet gentle heat, the mixture soon begins to bubble and a sort of rhythmic movement is observed which allows the gold particles to be attacked. After several hours of cooking, the gold imparts its colour to the preparation. Once the mixture has settled, one can in fact see the dew at the top become gold in colour, evidence of the internal work which has been accomplished during the coction. To obtain this first elixir, one must resort to many coctions each of several hours' duration and separated by several hours of inactivity during which an examination is made of the colouring which the preparation has adopted. Watch for the apparition of the symbolic Star which is seen floating on the surface. It is the appearance of this star which indicates that the Elixir is perfect, but a further period of waiting is needed before use can be made of it, as certain elements have to be deposited at the base of the receptacle.

The same experiment undertaken with the same dissolving powder and with dew but WITHOUT METALLIC GOLD, also produces an alkaline liquid but one WITHOUT COLOUR. THE GOLDEN COLOUR ONLY APPEARS IN THE PRESENCE OF POWDERED GOLD.

Spectrum analysis of the liquid, however, has never revealed the existence of the gold. One is therefore bound to admit that the colour of the gold is not evident, in its essential state, to the laws of optics. This corresponds with the theories of the ancient alchemists who thought that gold possesses a soul and a body and that this soul, WHICH IS ITS COLOUR, contains in itself the medicinal and therapeutic properties of the metal. In the

operations described above, we can say that the gold is in some way separated from its material envelope and transported to a higher dimension which still remains to be discovered by science.

Having obtained this specimen. I sent it for experimental purposes to several organisations open to this kind of science. To be interested in such a preparation of course presupposes that one admits, in addition to the physical body, the existence of an etheric body and of other ultimate states of being.

This aurified liquor, which according to spectrum analysis contains not the slightest trace of gold, is alkaline and has no toxic element which would prohibit its use. But what in fact is it in relation to the ancient alchemical terms? Is it POTABLE GOLD, VEGETABLE GOLD or VEGETABILISED GOLD? Or again is it FLOWER OF GOLD, so called because of a golden star which floats above the liquor? It is difficult to say. However, as I shall stress a little later on, I am tempted to see in it, comparing it with certain ancient texts, that Vegetable Gold so called because the corresponding solvent is neither a metal nor a mineral. It comes from the earth and is transformed after years of preparation. After it has several times produced its INTERNAL FIRE and become totally neutral and inactive, the Leaven can regain its energy if it is mixed with a large quantity of green plants, sap and dew, alternatively being moistened and dried.

After several alterations, the Leaven regains its black colour and can again start to calcinate. By this means one obtains a new powder, regenerated and capable in its turn after coction in a closed vessel on a gentle and long-burning fire in the presence of dew, of separating out the colour from gold.

Finally, a fact worth mentioning: at the beginning of operations in 1948 we obtained from a mass of First Matter weighing a little over 2 kg in the raw state, a quantity of Matter dried and freed of a thousand little

stones, which weighed 1.80 kg. During twelve years, considerable quantities of plants, sap and dew were added to this Matter. In 1960, after incineration, the weight was still 1.80 kg. Thus the addition of nutritious elements had absolutely no effect on the weight of the First Matter, in spite of the transformation which the latter had undergone.

To conclude this introductory chapter, I should point out that several years' experience have confirmed that the regeneration of the solvent powder always takes place in the same way: alternate moistening and drying until the black colour is obtained, then incineration. The new powder obtained in this way, equal in weight to the old, possesses the same qualities as it. It will produce liquors with the same therapeutic properties and the same colour as the earlier ones.

Finally, I searched for the means to augment the mass of solvent powder produced in this way. I was able eventually to discover a way of increasing production slowly but surely. It is sufficient to be attentive to the unfolding of the operations and always to act with great caution, for it is easier to lose the powder prepared so painstakingly than it is to conserve or regenerate it. In 1961 I confided the testing of the first liquors of gold which I possessed to certain German laboratories whose way of thinking assured me of a welcome. Following indisputable medical evidence of cures and a whole collection of detailed facts, I decided to persevere and to elaborate this new medicine in the hope of ensuring its application.

TWO

THE OBSERVATION OF NATURE; ASTROLOGY

How the astrologers and alchemists observed and imitated the phenomena of nature in preparing the peat and in causing it to undergo successive metamorphoses.

To understand the alchemists, one has to saturate oneself in the fund of knowledge on which their system was based. One has also to assimilate their method according to the rules of astrology, a science which formerly presided over the study of nature. My intention here is not to give an astrology or an alchemy lesson: those of you who are interested in these matters will have no difficulty in finding the necessary texts.

Nevertheless, to understand these texts, it seems to me primarily essential to observe nature and to try and fathom the import of the transformations undergone during the yearly cycle. In other words, to grasp what true alchemy is, to penetrate to the principles and laws, one has to be in the state of mind of the farmer who, from seed time to harvest never loses sight of his crop. If I was not of peasant stock, if circumstances had not enabled me to observe and understand all aspects of nature, if I had not learned about astrology, the principles of occultism and the four

elements, then in all probability the alchemical texts would have remained a complete mystery to me.

It will be clear then why I am going to use this chapter to put you on the right road. You will see how necessary it is to pay close attention to nature so as to imitate and anticipate her in the manner of the ancient alchemists. Let us now go into the laboratory where you will take your first steps.

Begin by forgetting what you have learned, above all the principles of astronomy—however perfect they may be. Adopt instead the point of view of the ancients, of Ptolemy and his geocentric system which judged phenomena on what they appeared to be. In this way you will be attempting to grasp the double nature of things, the visible and the invisible. Just as the Chinese take account of *Yin* and *Yang*, the black and the white, so we always see nature as having two aspects. Similarly, there is good and bad, heaven and hell and so on. By paying particular attention to the objective/subjective duality of things, you will be in a position to understand their profound meaning. We can now get to the heart of the matter.

Imagine for a moment that you are in the open, in the middle of a huge plain. Try and get your bearings. You will see yourself at the centre of a flat surface area. Above your head stretches the hemisphere of heaven. There is also a hemisphere under your feet but it is invisible to you. Very soon you realise that you are *condemned* to be at the centre of this system. In whatever direction you walk, the sky seems to move with you and so you will never reach a given point on the horizon. This is the way the world appears; you are trapped, in spite of your freedom to come and go as you please on its face. Stay in the same spot and observe the movement of the stars and of the Sun in particular. You will see them move slowly from east to west, as if the entire heavens were turning round you once every twenty-four hours. The first impression, and a valid, one, is this: You are at the centre of a flat earth and the

sky is revolving slowly round you. Astrology is founded on exactly these generalisations which take into account only the apparent positions and movements of the stars, ascribing them to a geocentric system.

Now turn your attention away from the daily movement of nature to her annual cycle. Each year, at certain times, you will see nature born afresh, bursting and blossoming, putting forth leaves and producing flowers. Soon the flowers will be superceded by fruit, the seed carriers. In summer, nature will reach maturity and harvesting will begin. Then, with the approach of hard times, you will see nature withdraw little by little, finally falling asleep altogether during winter.

Attentive and detailed observation of the successive stages of growth and decay led the astrologers and alchemists of the past to their discovery of the laws of nature. From this knowledge they elaborated a science of profound interest, yet one which today is scarcely known. Our civilisation, at the height of materialism, must of necessity turn from what was once of prime importance. But let us, using the original terms, rediscover and understand the way in which the ancients reasoned.

The first thing to notice is that nature's cycle can be broken down into two distinct phases:

An outgoing phase covering spring and summer. During this time the plants spring up, bud, flower, fruit and begin to die away.

An ingoing phase covering autumn and winter. Now the plants die away entirely. Their retrogression can be measured from the time of the autumn equinox. Now, too, nights become longer than days and the temperature falls progressively.

Next, the early observers broke the annual cycle down into three equal parts of four months, starting from the spring equinox, which is in a way the departure point of the astrological year. These can be dealt with as follows:

The first period, in which is seen the growth and development of all vegetation. It is the time of plant rebirth, of the first buds, of the growth of leaves; the time, too, of sprouting meadows, of flowering, swelling and ripening fruit in the early summer months. This time coincides with lengthening days and rising temperatures. With each successive day the sun appears to climb higher above the horizon into the celestial sphere.

The second period is the time of fruition, of the harvesting and gathering into barns of grain and cereals. It is vintage time and fruit-picking time. It shows itself in lush vegetation and the profits to be reaped therefrom. It covers the latter two months of summer and the first two of autumn and is the most joyous period of the year, for all nature's bounty is at our disposal. Already, though, the sun has passed the autumn equinox, the days start to draw in and the temperature falls.

The third period extends over the last month of autumn and the whole of winter. The days are shorter, for the sun is heating the opposite hemisphere, thus symbolically vitalising the earth hidden beneath our feet. At this time, too, the earth, exhausted after having nourished a year's vegetation, undergoes the preparation which will renew its regenerative powers.

We are about to see the role played by the *four elements*, *Fire*, *Earth*, *Water and Air*, whose significance nowadays is lost. In fact they are linked with what will be the last of our divisions of the natural cycle, the familiar one of the *four seasons*, *Spring*, *Summer*, *Autumn and Winter*. We are all aware of the limits of the seasons. They are fixed by the passage of the sun through the equinoxes and the solstices. At the equinoxes, day and night are of equal length. At the summer solstice the days are at their longest, while the nights are at their longest at the winter solstice. The ancients distinguished the seasons in the following manner: they said that *Spring* is *wet and warm* and corresponds to the element *Air*; *Summer* is *warm and dry*,

corresponding to *Fire*; *Autumn dry and cold*, corresponding to *Water*.

Correspondences with the four elements are further found in the subdivisions of the seasons. Pythagoras, after dividing the annual cycle into two phases, three periods and four seasons, defines the *Tetraktys* or triple nature of the four elements. He also mentions the twelve signs of the zodiac, of which three make up each season. Before going on to examine the zodiac, it is necessary to make the following point.

The signs of the zodiac, whose symbolism we are about to analyse and link with the natural phenomena defining them and giving them their names, have nothing in common with the astronomer's constellations of the zodiac. These latter are fixed star groupings which can, for a certain length of time, coincide with the corresponding signs of the zodiac. Carried along by the equinoxial precession movement, however, these constellations move away from the correspondingly named signs and bear no relation to the blossoming forth of vegetation. This depends exclusively on the position of the sun. For this reason the signs of the zodiac should be seen simply as seasonal subdivisions, presiding over the same phenomena at the same time each year. In addition, one can say that the signs of the zodiac are empty spaces marking the sun's course throughout the year. Each one marks a period during which some clearly defined facet of nature is in evidence. By transposition, these facets reflect tendencies inherent in people born during the corresponding periods. In this way astrology, alchemy and the study of nature are closely linked by observations whose significance will now be explained.

The twelve Signs of the Zodiac hold the secret of Nature

The twelve signs of the zodiac are well known. What is not generally known, though, is the correspondence between

them and the Elements and also the details which distinguish one from another even when of the same elementary nature. This *triple nature of the four elements*, cited in all astrological texts, seems to be ignored by many astrologers in their interpretations. Here is a resumé of it:

The Fire signs are Aries, Leo and Sagittarius.
The Air signs are Gemini, Libra and Aquarius.
The Earth signs are Taurus, Virgo and Capricorn.
The Water signs are Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces.

Now let us examine each of these twelve signs.

1. *Aries*, the Ram (March 21st–April 20th). The spring Fire sign. This corresponds to the period when the sun, having passed the spring equinox, daily climbs higher above the horizon. Days lengthen, the temperature rises and the element Fire reveals its expansive and beneficent nature giving the initial impetus to plant life. It is the *Fire which glows*, which rises from the roots to the stem. It causes the stem to grow above the ground, the grass to turn green, the buds to swell and burst, the leaves and early flowers to appear. This bursting forth of vegetation takes place with unprecedented dynamism, progressing and accelerating in astounding fashion. The ancient herbalists and alchemists who sought plants from which to capture the vital fluid of nature never failed to observe these phenomena, above all at dawn on a clear, calm morning. At this time they gathered plants which had reached ground level, including the roots. The vital fluid so captured, the expansive fire containing life and the most important elements, enabled them to prepare their elixir. . . . They knew that the ground had lain fallow during the winter months and had been enriched with substances which let the plants develop. The gathering of buds, small shoots and a multiplicity of plants is an important task, all the more so since it is accompanied by sampling of the morning dew. This

activity is shown in one of the plates of the *Mutus Liber*, the silent Bible of the alchemists. The method to be followed is revealed, the ram in the centre of the picture indicating the time of year to perform the task.

From the psychological point of view, those born under the sign of the ram display enterprise, dynamism and enthusiasm, a need to move quickly, to be at the head of the group, leading like the ram. The tendencies expressed by Aries impel such people to action, sometimes inciting them to violent impulses and even to blows.

For these reasons the ancients chose the ram as symbol of the first sector of the zodiac, that which the astrologers placed under the influence of Mars. In the human body Aries corresponds to the head, seat of vitality.

Whether with regard to man or to the vegetable kingdom, one can see that the ram signifies an impetus to rise, to grow under the exceptional dynamism of the fiery element.

2. *Taurus*, the Bull (April 21st–May 20th). The spring Earth sign. Consider the growth of vegetation under this earth sign. The ground is reheated through the impulse of the preceding sign which has released the breath of life held in during the winter. This allows the fixing of those particles which supply the material elements needed by plants for full growth. This growth is rapid. It is additionally aided by the exalted state of the moon, which is linked with the rising sap. During the month of May, sap and dew were the richest elements which the herbalists and alchemists of old took. This they did with the intention of immersing in them the essential plants whose quintessence they wished to extract. In the plate from the *Mutus Liber* already mentioned, the bull is at the side of the ram. This shows that the task is also to be carried out in May. Taurus is the finest and fairest earth sign from nature's point of view and so is said to be under the influence of Venus, the planet to which grace and beauty are ascribed.

This sign produces people of healthy, robust constitution. The animal which symbolises it conveys the notion of slow but steady labour, carried out with patience and perseverance. Such are the qualities attributed to the Taurean. However, Taureans are also said to be capable of obstinacy, going right to the limits of their strength and endurance. This they must be warned against, for such behaviour puts one in mind of a newly enriched piece of land which, under this sign, might yield all its fertilising properties and would then need to be left fallow for a long time in order to regain its strength. If one sows too thick, seeking the maximum profit, one very soon exhausts the resources of this earth so rich at the outset.

From the foregoing one can grasp the meaning of analogies expressed in the Tradition, analogies for which there is usually insufficient explanation.

3. *Gemini*, the Twins (May 21st–June 21st). The spring Air sign. The sun's exaltation at the beginning of the cycle allowed the rebirth of nature's secret fire and the animation of the spirit. The moon's exaltation caused the sap to rise and the plants to become fragrant. The earth in its turn supplied the body-building elements for the process of combustion. All these things bring us to the state existing under Gemini, third sign of the zodiac. Gemini is symbolised by two children. This double sign indicates the perfect birth which corresponds here to the appearance of the various plants and flowers. Just as children change in appearance from one year to the next, so rapid change is the keynote here. Our attention is also focused on the element Air, that is the physical air and our breathing of it. Under this sign the plants are most alive and most intensely green, for this is the time of greatest assimilation of chlorophyll. During the last month of spring the sun rises ever higher above the horizon as the longest day approaches. The plants, too, grow to their maximum height. The action of the sun's rays is seen above all in the

tips of plants, in the flowers and the fruit. Now that they are full grown, the different species of plants are easily distinguishable.

This sign is under the influence of Mercury. Those born under it are as impressionable as nature at this time. They change constantly, adapting their attitude to needs and circumstances. By the same token they are restless and settle down with difficulty. Curious and analytically minded, they are generally intelligent and deft, with an interest in everything around them.

Throughout this month, even on Midsummer Day, the alchemists continued to gather those plants to which they attribute medicinal properties.

4. *Cancer*, the Crab (June 22nd–July 22nd). The summer Water sign. As the sun reaches the summer solstice, the time of its highest and longest trajectory, plants also reach their natural zenith. From now on the process will be one of consolidation. The fruit will swell as the sap continues to rise, as if issue of some pump which, though invisible, is more perfect than anything we can imagine. Cancer is placed under the influence of the moon. Now the alchemists bring the first stage of their work to a close and meditate on the rising of the gap. They question why this phenomenon does not obey the laws of gravity. At the same time they watch the creepers and tall plants point skywards as the sap floods into every pore. They reflect that certain qualities remain hidden from man's objective observation. This is expressed symbolically by the crab which hides under a stone at the bottom of the stream. The analogy also holds good for the stream: from source to river it follows the contours of the ground and its own fancy. Nothing can stop it. It overflows dams and breaks through obstacles. These are the laws which the rising sap obeys.

Those born under Cancer are passive by nature. They display more force of inertia than actual will power. They

live according to their whim, putting up with every constraint—until the final drop bursts the dam.

Alchemists also know the use of the *water of life* which they find in nature. It contains the living particles which enrich the Peat during the long process of wetting and drying. They think, too, of the labours of Hercules. These evoke for them the invisible force which pushes the sap upwards so that the plant may attain its full height. This force is really more obvious than that brought to light by Pascal's well-known bombshell.

'Chemists use fire to burn, we use water', say the alchemists and indeed the only use they make of external fire is to dry their Matter.

5. *Leo*, the Lion (July 23rd–August 23rd). The summer Fire sign. Now we reach the heart of summer, the hottest time of the year. This Fire sign is very different from Aries. In early spring the fire *grows progressively*, while in summer it is fixed at its point of maximum power. Fruit which has swelled under the preceding sign but is still acid and unpalatable is now ripened by solar radiation (the external fire). This brings it to perfection. That which was indigestible and acid becomes soft, sweet and nourishing. The alchemists compare this aspect of nature to the fire of their coction. They know that an elixir, however perfect it appears, must be ripened, prepared and progressively super-heated to obtain even greater perfection. They know that once they have prepared their Alkaest* they will only obtain the elixir by determined superheating in the form of coction and in the presence of perfect metal. The medicinal properties of the metal will also come into play. Gold is known to be the most perfect of metals and Leo is known to be governed by the sun. As Raymond Lully says, metal has a soul and a body. Its soul is its colour. This contains the metal's regenerative and

* Alkaest or alcaest: word invented by Paracelsus. It seems to be without etymology. It means elixir of health or universal solvent.

medicinal properties. If the Alkaest which has reached the first stage of perfection is mixed with celestial dew containing several particles of powdered gold and then submitted to the fire of coction for many hours it will, thanks to the rhythmic movement to which the gold is subjected, separate the soul of this latter from its body or ashes.

This is the way to obtain medicine of the first order. The operation is analogous to the bombardment of the sun's rays on the skins of fruit. The fruit gradually ripens until it becomes ideal food.

Those born under Leo are sometimes moved by a great ideal but they are also authoritarian. They accept their responsibilities and like to be obeyed. They may be dominating but they are good protectors and often generous. They can be proud, tyrannical or despotic when the sun is in a bad aspect but in general they are courageous, like the lion whose name they bear.

Leo, under the sun's influence, is oriented towards every life source. Its influence ripens grain and corn and a variety of elements which contribute to the reproduction of the species. In humans, Leo acts on the heart and aids the general equilibrium of the circulation.

6. *Virgo*, the Virgin (August 24th–September 22nd). The summer Earth sign. This last summer sign presides principally over the gradual drying out of vegetation and the harvesting, garnering and storing of it for preservation during the coming months. Hence the ear of grain as symbol. Why then is it also symbolised by the Virgin? Here are the secret reasons: This sterile ground, whose vitality has been drained in nourishing plant life, is without value. Like the Alkaest which gives up its salts and liberates its energies during coction in order to separate the gold, such earth has to be left to rest. It then requires nourishment, so that it may be regenerated during the coming months. Great care must therefore be paid to this element. Why, though, the mysterious name of Virgin? Quite simply

because two signs—Gemini and Virgo—are ruled by Mercury. Between them in the zodiac lies a right angle. One is an Air sign, the other an Earth sign. This elementary difference, plus the intervening right angle, indicates that they are on different levels, Gemini, the more spiritual, sees the growth of flowers and the associated fertility. Under Virgo, though, the situation is more material as fruit and grain reach maturity. But just as the flowers have been physically fertilised so one can say that the Virgin has been spiritually fertilised in order to give birth to the Son of God. The Annunciation has come to her from the Archangel Gabriel. Alchemists speak also of the *Birth of the Prince*, meaning that moment when the Work reaches full perfection.

Virgoans are mysterious people who are often misunderstood. They are careful, painstaking, ordered and methodical in their work. They make the ideal number two, for they often hesitate when faced with heavy responsibilities. In their own special way they await the Annunciation.

7. *Libra*, the Scales (September 23rd–October 23rd). The autumn Air sign. The sun, having crossed the autumn equinox, will now ascribe an ever-increasing arc under the earth. As far as we are concerned, the sun dips further and further below the horizon. The days grow shorter and the temperature falls. Libra symbolises a change of balance. It is this balance which must now be maintained through accurate calculation. What nature has given us must be carefully divided up so that it may last until next harvest time.

This sign, indicating a period when all is at our disposal, is usually a fortunate one for those who bear its mark. They tend to be sensitive yet free from care and love the good things in life, both for themselves and for their companions. They often possess great artistic flair, for Libra is under the influence of Venus. They also yearn to see justice and fair play.

If we turn our attention to the basic nature of the sign we find that its influence, unlike that of Gemini, is restrictive. At the beginning of autumn the leaves wither and gradually fall off. They have stopped breathing and so they die. This inversion of what took place under the spring Air sign is to the advantage of events underground. It is as if nature were exhaling, then drawing new breath. We say that the sap falls back but it is really that it dries out progressively. There is a simultaneous reduction in respiratory function. Alchemists sometimes say that their work begins not at the spring but at the autumn equinox. They are thinking principally of the First Matter which is lying under the ground and which must be chosen, prepared and then removed. This must not take place, though, until it has received the maximum irradiation of etheric energy. They will have to give thought, too, to the regeneration of the Alkaest whose vitality was lost during the final coctions. Looked at from one point of view, all these things form part of the initial task. Finally, the alchemist must grasp that process which begins at the autumn equinox and which will allow regeneration of the earth during the long winter nights. Then, liberal irradiation by the sun's rays of the earth beneath our feet takes place. This is the principal task and one which it is impossible for us to look at objectively.

8. *Scorpio*, the Scorpion (October 24th–November 22nd). The autumn Water sign. After the first autumn rain, nature is quickly stripped of her finery. The action of water under this sign is in a downward direction, whereas under Cancer it was an upward one. This is the moment to prepare the ground and to add to it all the organic remains which must be assimilated. At the same time the vegetable matter begins to rot more quickly, forming the humus needed for regeneration. Alchemists are very well aware of this, as are spagirists. They focus all their attention on the phenomenon of corruption, which process is known as

the *key of nature*. In certain operations which cause plants to rot, so that the pure becomes separated from the impure, the spagirists ensure that the plants become black. On the other hand they also make sure that the plants do not burn too much, for this would make the ashes unsuitable for the preparation of their panacea. Nature must be observed stage by stage to see that the process of corruption takes place very slowly when there is an abundance of water. Bear in mind that if autumn is described as dry, this is not with reference to the weather but because the sap no longer rises. The element water here acts in a destructive capacity. It does so slowly and tenaciously, manifesting an incredible passive force in its desire to reduce everything to chaos, the state of undifferentiated matter. The spirit may then be liberated and separated from the inert and combustible matter, just as the body separates from the soul after death.

Placed under the aegis of Mars or Pluto, this sign confers an active, secretive and even corrupt nature on those born under it. They are capable of fighting tenaciously, not with the aim of irrevocable destruction but in order that something new and better might be brought about. Natives of Scorpio are also good at research and at any activity performed in the shadows or in dark, secret places. They work in silence and remain undetected.

This eighth sign of the zodiac corresponds to everything which must pass away. In the eyes of the alchemist, it stands for the renowned operation which brings the First Matter to its initial colour, the black of mortification. 'Nothing can be reborn if it does not first die', is a frequent alchemical saying. The way to the successful completion of this stage, that is to the *Raven*, is one of the most important problems in alchemy.

9. *Sagittarius*, the Centaur (November 23rd–December 22nd). The autumn Fire sign. We know that the first Fire sign—Aries—coincides with a rise in temperature signal-

ling the start of plant growth. The second—Leo—sees an explosion of heat, for it is the moment when the sun's rays achieve their maximum intensity and vegetation reaches full growth. Sagittarius, the third of the Fire signs, presides over falling temperatures. In fact it possesses a double significance, indicated by its symbol the Centaur which is half man, half horse. Medicinal properties are attributed to the sign, for its dominant planet is Jupiter.

What actually takes place at this time? The putrefaction achieved under the preceding Water sign—Scorpio—is well characterised by its symbol, the apparently harmless little creature with a lethal sting. Nature, once dead, behaves in the same way as a man who is killed: the soul detaches itself from the body. In this case the spirit of the vegetable matter, that is its living and energy-possessing qualities, liberates itself from the remaining substances which are then slowly consumed by the secret and regressive fire. If at autumn time you look at the ploughed, manured earth, you will soon grasp that the decayed elements of the dung heap, blackened by interior fire, are rapidly disappearing and that the earth is regaining its original appearance. The phenomena of alchemy are analogous: the Alkaest has lost its salts and its energy during the preceding coctions; it will be regenerated by plants and living matter gathered from nature. The secret fire activates corruption, leading to the absolute black. Then, when the moment arrives, the adept will proceed to incinerate the unusable residue. This will bring about the reappearance of the salts in the heart of the regenerated Alkaest, which in its turn regains the power to separate out gold in future coctions.

This sign is full of instruction for anyone who is able to 'read' nature. Sagittarians make gifted doctors, for they know how to act to combat illness and restore lost energy. The regressive fire is also characteristc of those who are by nature calm, level-headed and able effectively to combat any aggression from outside. The Sagittarian's ability

to prevail over the fragile or vulnerable makes him a successful director of an enterprise. Finally, Sagittarians inspire confidence in others by their own self-confidence, evident in their outward demeanour. By and large, Sagittarius constitutes a good astral signature.

10. *Capricorn* (December 23rd–January 21st). The winter Earth sign. Early winter is the time when the earth, now broken down into its separate elements by the corruption and combustion characteristic of the two previous signs, slowly assimilates the nutritious substances which have been given to it. The symbol of this sign is a mountain animal, evoking the analogy of the earth's work under Capricorn. It also evokes the arid soil, often bare of vegetation, which one finds at high altitudes. This does not mean, however, that the ground is poor. It has been fertilised and often already sown at this point but the work of assimilation and of preparation for a return to the original state favouring vegetation is gradual and time-consuming.

Those born under Capricorn are similarly slow in asserting themselves. They have to persevere in making an effort over a long period of time if they are to benefit from their labours. Often, success comes to them only in the second half of their lives. Their destiny is favourable or otherwise according to the aspect of this star. Alchemists consider this silent period when nothing seems to be happening as a time of preparation and of return to a state of equilibrium. It is also the time when they go in search of the First Matter which will be used in the initial stages of the work. The life of nature is entirely concentrated in the ground and the roots it contains and protects from the cold. Certain alchemical operations require a similar sort of silence and calm. One such example is the soaking of the evolving peat. In this operation the Matter has to be left for a certain time in the cold. It is covered by waters which abstract its interior fire and in so doing becomes gradually

blacker. This operation is well known to those adepts who want to obtain the black of the third degree, that is to say total incineration which leaves nothing except a perfect and powerful salt. This salt is then ready to provide the true Leaven which will open metals and release the essence of their colour.

11. *Aquarius*, the Water Carrier (January 21st–February 19th) The winter Air sign. This sign is certainly the least known and most enigmatic of all. It occurs right in the heart of winter, at the coldest time of year. Its opposite, Leo, is the warmest Fire sign. Because it is so enigmatic an attempt will now be made to explain as fully as possible in what sense it acts as an inspiration to the alchemist. The symbol is a woman pouring out the contents of an urn. This might seem an unlikely symbol for an air sign. The explanation is this: the contents of the urn represent irradiation, the etheric forces of nature which are fully active underground. We know that the first Air sign, Gemini, presides over the time in spring when all vegetation is breathing at maximum intensity. The second, Libra, marks the time in autumn when these respiratory functions are on the wane and plant life is dying. Aquarius, the third Air sign, corresponds to the fullest manifestation of air in the interior of the earth. By irradiation it imparts new life to roots, induces internal breathing and generally awakens that which was sleeping. Compare this with the activity under the opposite sign, Leo, where the fruit is ripened by the sun. The time of Aquarius is, for the alchemist, the moment to acquire his First Matter, while it still possesses etheric forces. Once the Matter has been isolated from the ground, it can be brought to life again by impregnation with vegetable substances and dew whenever the circumstances are appropriate.

Those born under Aquarius live intense interior lives and possess many non-apparent qualities. These hidden riches are aroused by contact with life.

This sign, under the rule of Saturn and Uranus remains by far the most secret, even for astrologers.

12. *Pisces*, the Fish (February 20th–March 20th). The winter Water sign. Under Aquarius, the element Air irradiated seeds and plants with the breath of life, promoting internal breathing in them. Pisces the Water Sign will now nourish them; the tissue dried out during winter will gradually swell and regain its capacity to breathe. Buds, too, will swell before bursting under the fire of the Ram. We know that the first Water sign—Cancer—presides at the rising of the sap which ripens the fruit and brings the plant to full growth. The second—Scorpio—which comes after the autumn equinox, sees the draining of the sap and subsequent collapse and decay of the plant. Between the time of Scorpio and the time of Pisces, decay is accomplished, while the fire of Sagittarius in some measure burns up the remaining combustible matter. The elements which will catalyse new life are released through decay and, under Capricorn, are assimilated back into the earth, which thus regains its resources.

Pisces is a sign of fertility. The salts and encapsuled energy buried in the ground combine and prepare, drop by drop, the virginal milk whose job is to nourish roots and seeds at the approach of spring. The sign is ruled by Neptune, whose connections with germination for growth and indeed for anything which, like the copulation of fish, takes place in secret. Roots and seeds await only the initial impulse to spring into life, yet hesitate for fear that the cold might prove fatal if they are too early.

Thus the natives of Pisces are hesitant and indecisive, yet intuitive. They feel various possibilities within them which will only be actualised according to circumstances. This double nature produces individuals who are apparently passive and sympathetic but who always obey their inner promptings. Sometimes these lead to totally unexpected behaviour.

From these observations alchemists have deduced the way in which progressively to nourish their First Matter, using little known yet highly effective preparations. It consists in drop by drop addition of dew and early plants to the First Matter for forty days in a sealed water-bath. The aim of this process is to extract the first liquor, the *Virginal Milk*, essential for the subsequent preparation of the *Major Leaven*. This Leaven is linked to Neptune as are all things which begin life from scratch, in the manner of seeds.

Astrology is only one step from Alchemy,
Alchemy only one step from Medicine

If one examines nature in all her aspects and so regains knowledge of the laws governing the successive stages of plant life, one can easily discover the means of producing that *New Earth* which is used by the spagirists in their work. The moment when the First Matter may be acquired is determined by the cycle of the moon in Pisces. It will be at that time of night when there is maximum concentration of etheric forces at the chosen spot.

The forces of life which preside over the rebirth and growth of vegetation are actualised in spring time. After irradiation during Aquarius, roots and buds swell under the double sign of Pisces. Already it is possible to collect the initial elements from which one will obtain the Virginal Milk with which to nourish the seed. The three spring months which follow see the accumulation of life forces in the plants and dew gathered from nature and which have then to be 'fixed' by the process already described. This process is governed by laws expressed in the signs of the zodiac. Under successive signs the First Matter is gradually impregnated by vegetable elements which it assimilates and digests. After each series of operations—impregnation, rest, digestion and finally drying—

these properties increase. By this means the Matter attains its First Perfection, once the necessary period of time has elapsed. This time is much greater than the cycle of one year in which nature accomplishes the same phenomena.

It is the astrologer who guides the alchemist until a certain moment when the latter has to consider matters from a completely different angle. This is when he has to assess the worth of his results in human terms—and here the notion of medicine makes its entry.

By the principle of analogy it can freely be admitted that the four-season cycle corresponds to the four periods of the human life: spring to *youth*, summer to *virility*, autumn to *maturity*, and winter to *old age*. However, while the seasons are strictly regulated by the annual course of the sun, the length of a man's life is not laid down in any way. Surely it does not therefore seem impossible to prolong human life on condition that one can capture the life-forces at the beginning of spring, and make of them a preparation which the body can assimilate? In this way one should be able to rejuvenate the human body and so postpone old age and decay. Moderate use of Medicine of the First Order does without doubt work in this way. It does require though, that the man who uses it lives a relatively ordered and sensible life.

Furthermore, observations of the various natural cycles brings to light no evidence of absolute regularity in the phenomena of the elements. Some springs are colder than the average, some wetter; some summers are hot and dry, others wet and humid; winter may be severe or simply wet. Irregularities exist in man also. They are seen in different temperaments, in excess or lack in specific areas and in varying degrees of resistance to disease. All these facts prompted the early researchers to experiment with many different medicines, each one intended to fight a particular malady. Similarly, today, the ever-increasing variety of medicines available caters for the infinite variety of illnesses from which we suffer, each in his own way. It

follows that our basic spagiric preparation can in no way be considered a specific remedy. It should be seen rather as an effective energiser and stimulant, a supplier of new life forces. These should allow the sick man to react more readily and the particular medicine to work more effectively. The tests carried out by a large number of doctors tend to confirm this point. This in no way precludes our preparation from having particular effect on heart conditions of vascular origin and on the kidneys and liver as stated in traditional writings. In the long-term it is an excellent regenerative agent for organic cells.

THREE

THE ALCHEMIST'S FIRST MATTER AND HOW TO OBTAIN IT

The Adept who reveals all he knows about the First Matter is not betraying any trust, for the means by which it is obtained remain very personal, linked to nature and to the Alchemist's own individual preparation.

Open any alchemical text you like: you will be told that the Work begins with *First Matter* whose nature no adept is empowered to reveal. He who does reveal what is only spoken of covertly, in whispers or in symbols, thereby exposes himself to dire calamities. You will be told that adepts with knowledge of the *First Matter* hold their peace, invoking the oath of secrecy. Some authors even go as far as to declare that they would prefer to die under conditions of the most appaling suffering than reveal the nature of this mysterious Matter. Is it really so important and so mysterious, and is it really so dangerous to reveal its nature to the profane? For the authors of these works also say that the First Matter is universally to be found in nature and that he who knows no better tramples it underfoot when he has only to bend down to pick some up.

If the First Matter is so zealously hidden from the uninstructed, it is because it is much more difficult to obtain

than people are willing to admit. In addition, the constituent elements probably differ from one adept to another. I am about to solve the dilemma for my own part, for I have have the firm intention of telling you what I know about the First Matter.

To begin with, several points concerned with the search for the First Matter must be considered, notably the seeker's natal chart. Study of this will indicate to the astrologer whether the person in question is a suitable candidate to complete the labours of Hermes. If the student is not himself an astrologer he must consult a master of that art. If he is, the knowledge will be useful in his work but the counsel of other masters will still be precious to him.

In this connection, it is more than likely that the ancient Magi were astrologers, alchemists *and* doctors. The association of these three interdependent disciplines makes for more enlightened diagnoses. Even though I had myself been initiated at an early age into astrology, it was the examination of my horoscope by a master which revealed my chances of success in the sphere of alchemy. To undertake such a task, however, I had to await inspiration, the command of higher forces. In the meantime, I was advised to content myself with study of the stars.

Here is a plan of the state of the Heavens at the time of my birth, together with an extract of the master's interpretation of it:

Saturn occupying the centre of the sky, between 9 and 10 degrees of Pisces has the following significance according to the translation of the *Volsafera* by the astrologer Sepharial: 'On a simple flat table are several pieces of chemical apparatus, notably a retort, a pestle and mortar, a curved tube and a crucible.'

And here is the interpretation: 'Special aptitude for studying one of the branches of chemistry. Shrewd analytic mind, able to solve problems by reference to the principles behind them, grasping the cause where others see only the effect. A character which admits no religion, yet is

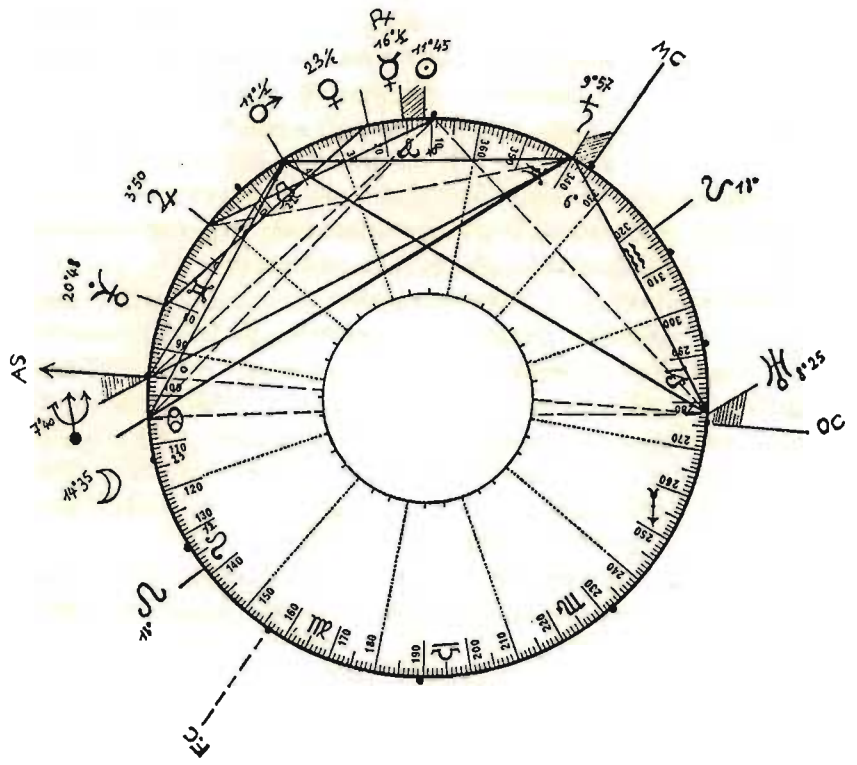


Fig. 1

Birth Chart, April 2nd, 1906 at 9.48 a.m.,
in the Department of the Loiret

incapable of producing thought which is not of a religious nature. In scientific research, everything is oriented towards the spiritual. Will become animated in discussing studies and subjects with which he is preoccupied.

This follows from the fact that Saturn occupies the centre of the sky and so determines my destiny. But Saturn is also Master of Capricorn situated in the eighth house and because of this can equally affect the spouse or person associated with the task undertaken. This person can, thanks to her psychic characteristics, establish contact with a higher spiritual plane and so serve as guide in fulfilling the tasks laid down by the couple's destiny.

Here, then, is one of the elementary principles concerned with the First Matter: the work unites the couple whose symbol appears, among other places, in the *Mutus Liber*.

I became interested in alchemy from the time the above information was given to me in 1935–6 and, from 1938 onwards, established a small laboratory in Paris. Then the war came and I had to abandon this early work. After that I dedicated myself to astrology, waiting for the person who should take on the role of Saturn and so become my collaborator. All these thoughts were finally shown to be accurate. Eventually, the initial revelations were given and we retired to the country to begin the task for which we were destined.

How we obtained our First Matter

Not only are there times when nature's life forces are at their most intense, there are also privileged areas where these forces are concentrated. This has caused numerous adepts to declare that the First Matter should be taken from black earth where, they say, it is distinguishable by its pellet-like apearance at the moment when it should be

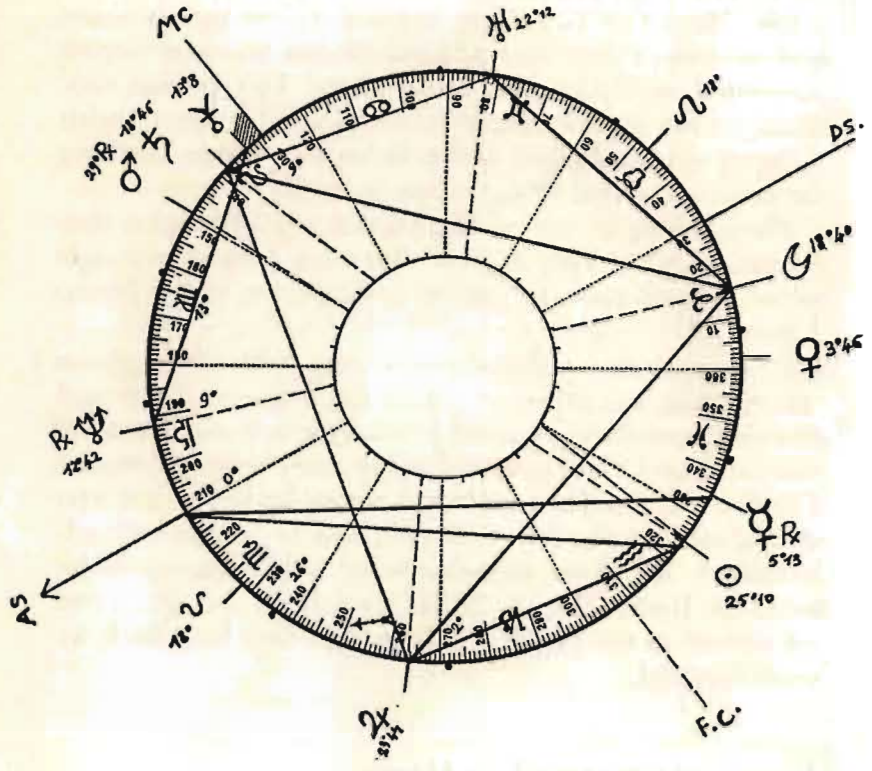


Fig. 2

Figure of the Heavens at midday on August 3rd, 1947

gathered. Some even go as far to consider searching with a hazel rod, an implement well-known to the ancients . . . Others advocate their own personal methods. In my case, I relied mostly on astrology, not only because it enabled me to fix the time and place to lift the matter, but also because it indicated how best to undertake each stage of the preparation.

On Sunday, August 3rd, 1947 I went for the first time with my female collaborator to the site in order to inspect the ground and fix the exact point at which, from that day on, intensification of certain currents should take place. These currents were destined to preside over the most daring attempt we could ever make: to seize the First Matter and capture the etheric forces, which would then gradually increase in intensity during irradiation of the Matter.

Here is the astral chart of that first sample which was obtained at midday local time on Sunday, August 3rd, 1947 (see Fig. 3). This moment coincided with the grand conjunction of Saturn and Pluto in Leo, crowned by the sun during the following days. Moreover, the full moon magnified the inspiration of the person who was guided, so that she was able to detect the earth currents more readily. This, in the traditional sense, is the true *Labour of Hercules*

Why was this particular moment chosen?

1. Firstly because the grand conjunction in Leo (the opposite sign to Aquarius), together with the crowning of the sun, signalled a very important planetary influx, one which would be earthed and so would prepare the Matter for the moment six months later when it would be taken. This would happen as the sun left Aquarius.

2. Next, because the operation had to be supported by a long lasting cycle like that of Saturn and Pluto, beginning that very day with the conjunction of the two planets. It was known that the work would be very lengthy and could not reach its first perfection until the moment Saturn had

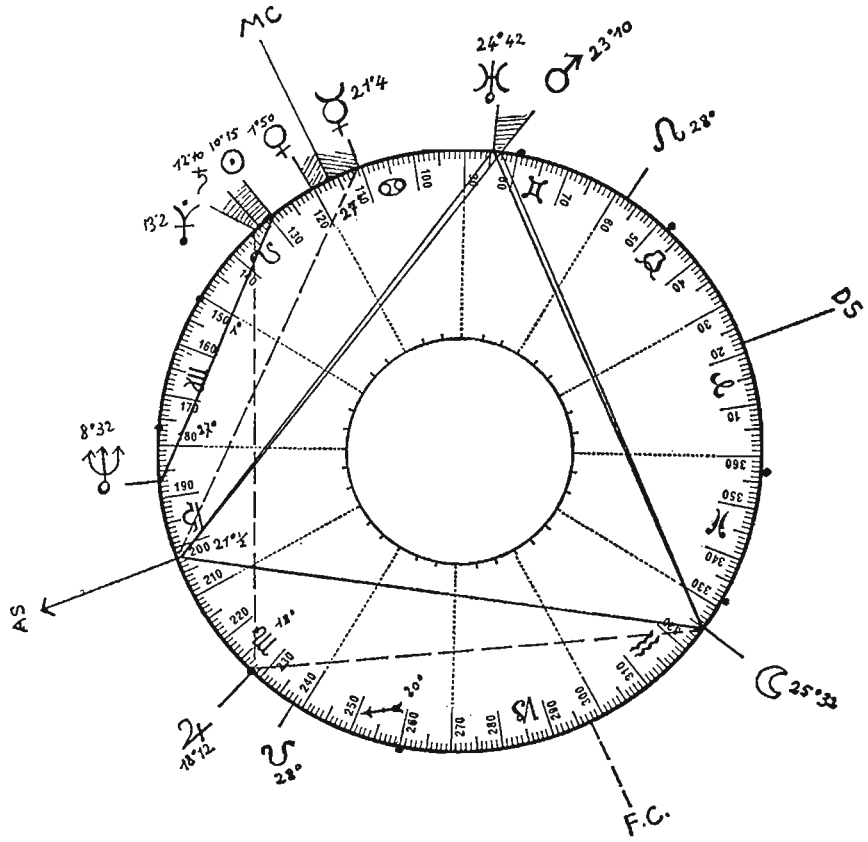


Fig. 3

Figure of the Heavens at midnight on February 15th, 1948 at Champignelles in the Department of Yonne

completed one half of its revolution, i.e., had reached Aquarius.

3. Finally, allowance had also to be made for the combination of subsequent cycles, particularly the grand conjunction of Uranus and Pluto in opposition to Saturn, occurring in 1965–6, which was also to mark an important stage in the work.

That is why the *decision* was taken on Sunday, August 3rd, 1947. The following week saw intensification of the currents while the sun passed successively through conjunction with Saturn and Pluto. February 15th, 1948, night of the new moon in Aquarius, was fixed as the date of *acquisition*; the time was to be soon after midnight, at the moment when the sun passed to the depths of the sky, under the feet of the seeker. This was so that the charge, the germ, might be gathered with the portion of black soil taken from the earth. The chart of the sky at the time is attached.

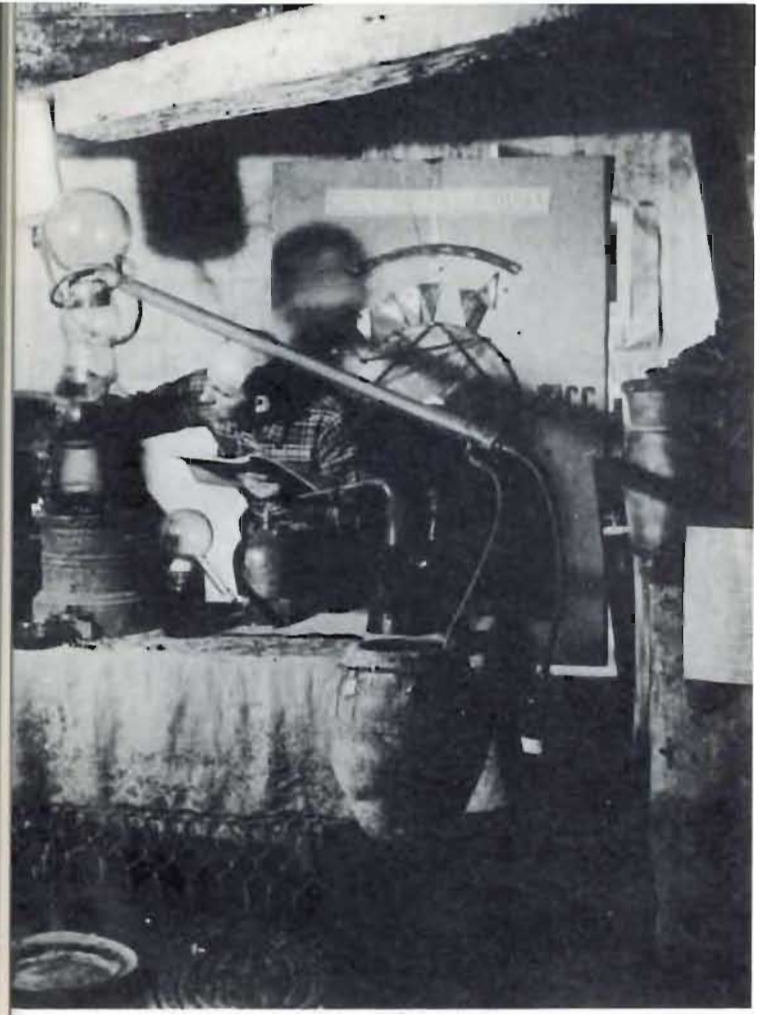
The operation of extraction lasted nearly two hours. It was begun shortly before midnight and continued while Scorpio remained in the ascendant. The stars in trine with Uranus (the sun) and Pluto (the moon) reinforced the currents between these planets. They were destined to go on increasing until 1965.

What *is* this First Matter hidden several centimetres under the turf? Is it not—at least as far as the layman is concerned—plain ordinary earth? For the initiated person it is something quite different: it is *living* earth, seized from the ground by a very special process belonging to the sphere of High Magic, which allows the adept assigned to the task to gain possession of an entire collection of physical and metaphysical principles. It is indeed physically earth, but charged with the forces of life which would instantly be returned to the ground if someone unaware of the necessary preparation sought to imitate our actions. With regard to the processes of acquisition, to the magical ceremonies which precede them and even to the reasons

behind the exact choice of day and hour, the alchemists are silent. These conditions cannot be enunciated like those in a simple chemical experiment. The zodiacal symbolism which we have studied explains firstly the choice of Aquarius as the most favourable period for acquisition. In addition, though, personal planetary correspondences must be taken into account and it is these which will determine the exact day and hour of operation. To this end, the student's horoscope must be studied and, on the basis of this, choice made of the most favourable moment while the sun is in Aquarius.

Apart from this rather individual nature of the choice, there is the preparation of the would-be adept himself. So that he may work under the best conditions, he has to observe very strict rules of purity and hygiene. He has to know how to avoid maleficent forces and how to accumulate an intensity of psychic energy. He has to observe the necessary isolation and be, as it were, in a state of grace. To reach this high spiritual level, interior prayer is essential. The days preceding acquisition, therefore, are marked by ceremonies whose secret the student guards jealously, so that no one may come and defile the place or divert the energy source. For the same reason, that part of the ground from which the Matter will be taken is itself prepared, encircled and isolated from outside currents. If, then, no adept can reveal his procedure, it is not because of some 'dangerous' secret which must be strictly preserved, but so that no desecration may compromise the success of the operation. Further, if the *modus operandi* follows clearly defined rules, it nevertheless varies according to the adept's horoscope, following the goal he has set himself and the commitment he has made. For, once on the Path and in possession of the magic charge, he may no longer go back. He must enter a spiritual course which demands a search for the highest perfection. It is known that the condition of progress in this sphere is that the seeker and his matter evolve together towards perfection.

Initial Researches

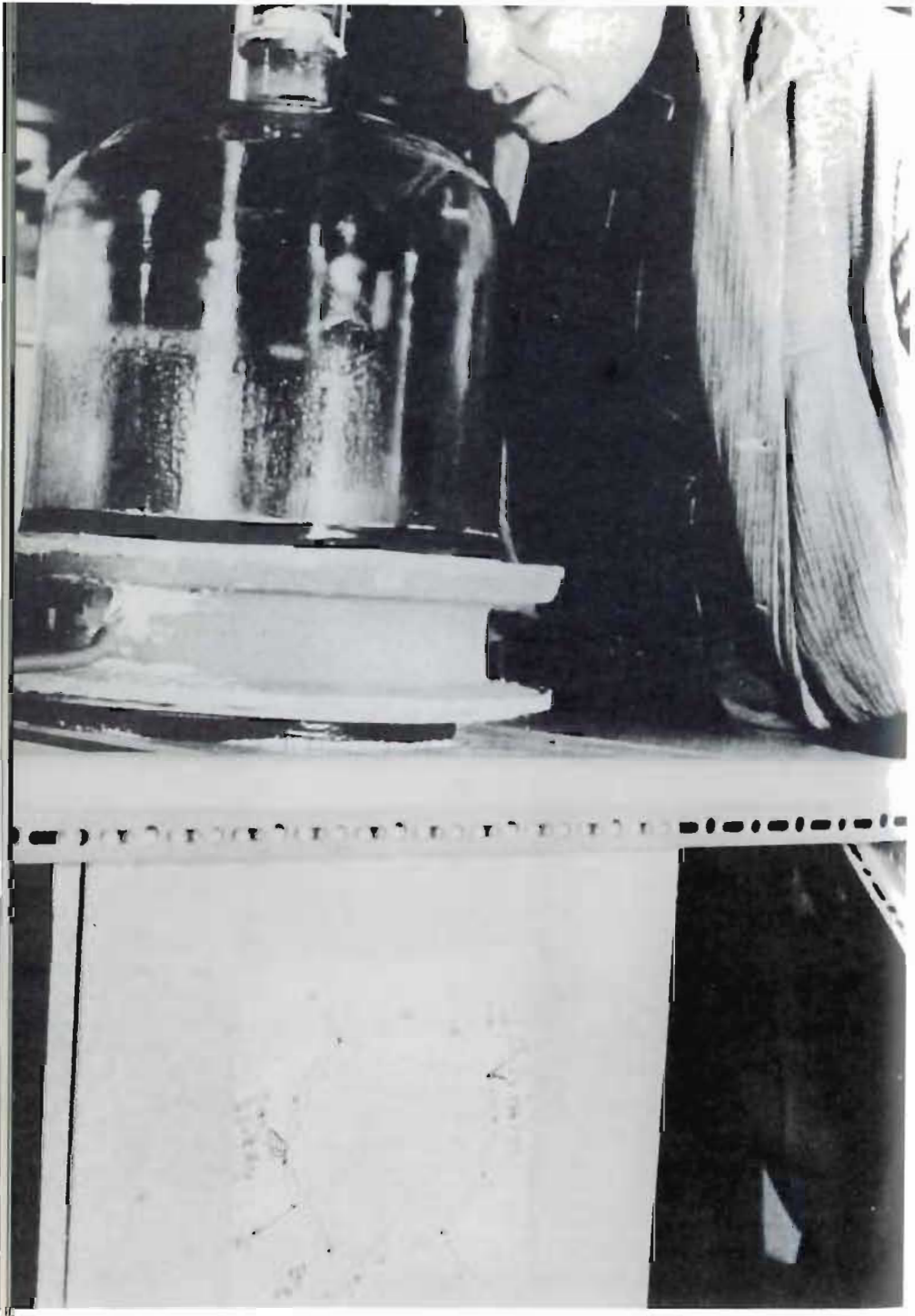


1948. Armand Barbault experiments *(above and preceding page)*. He distills dew in which plants are steeped. At that time his laboratory was installed in a barn.

The first drops of Gold. In 1960 the first drops of Potable Gold were extracted, using this oven. Armand Barbault mixed incinerated ash, powdered Gold and distilled dew. Charcoal was used for heating and decoction, blown with bellows as in the Middle Ages. Heating had to be carried out for seven periods of four hours each, with four hours rest between each period.

The new laboratory. The laboratory is transformed. All the heating is controlled by thermostats and many operations are fully automatic. Armand Barbault now lived in the Munster valley, in Alsace.

The importance of astrology. 31st May, 1950: the birth of Alexandre Barbault. Armand immediately casts his son's horoscope. Alexandre now continues his parents' work. The principal alchemical operations are always carried out when astrological configurations offer the chance of success. Nature and the movement of the stars are inextricably linked. Thus a conjunction (joining two elements together) always takes place at a new moon, and a separation at a full moon.



The importance of astrology. Crucial operations are always carried out in harmony with the astrological configuration.

Collecting dew. This is done before sunrise on fine Spring mornings. Lengths of canvas are dragged over the grass for a distance of about fifty metres. This gives about a litre of dew.

Collecting dew. The dew-soaked canvasses are then wrung out. The quality of dew depends on the kind of grass on which it is found: fields of wheat, barley, oats or clover. But this difference has only to be taken into account when preparing special spagiric remedies.

Thus the acquisition of the *Materia Prima* cannot be reduced to a search for earth or specially selected minerals, having regard to the goal to be reached. It consists rather in taking hold of universal forces which participate invisibly in the life process. It is this spark of life, visible to the adept at the time of the operation, in the altered state in which he then is, yet invisible to the uninitiated, which is the real object of the acquisition. Here, too, certain mysteries are forbidden the non-initiate, for the manner of operation is expressed in a struggle between the alchemical student and the forces of the earth which watch over this spark of life, preserving it from all attempts at theft.

I do not therefore think that anyone who is not prepared or guided or who has not received the command of spiritual forces, can ever gain possession of the *Integral Matter*. The seeker, as in a dream or in some secondary state, has symbolically to engage the Dragon in combat. He must pierce it with his lance and so transform his prey into a majestic lion, symbolising total success of the operation.

Between August 3rd, 1947, when the decision was made and February 15th, 1948, date of the actual acquisition, a whole series of tasks had therefore to be carried out. This consisted principally of purification, of cleansing and of tracing a circle round the chosen point. This latter was situated in a sunlit spot, in the middle of a clearing. The vegetation here was healthy, abundant and well away from cultivated land—i.e. it was a place to which no one went. Situated at the foot of a little valley hidden by surrounding shrubs, it was easily accessible yet one could work there without being disturbed or even seen. Everything, then, was ideal with regard to the nature of the work to be carried out.

In spite of the silence which I maintain over certain essential operations (for they are unique to the participant and have no bearing on the general rule), it must be admitted that knowing or having a presentiment of the nature of the First Matter is insufficient to acquire it. As

already stated, the acquisition demands special preparations. These must be carried out simultaneously on the Matter prior to extraction and on the person carrying out the extraction. This individual must himself be prepared so that he carries out the operation under the best physical, moral, psychological and spiritual conditions. He must be able to evolve to the level of the various manifestations if he wants the acquisition to reach the desired state of perfection.

For a full understanding of this first preparation, it is necessary to consider three very different stages. These demand in particular fairly detailed knowledge of the Quabalah and understanding that the Great Work relates from beginning to perfect ending to the *seven days of the Book of Moses called Genesis.*

But to return to the original subject: either the alchemist or his guide (whose role I shall explain shortly), must make contact with a higher spiritual plane so that they may serve as vehicle for the currents which will subsequently be made manifest. Which of the two shall fulfil this function is determined by examination of the alchemist's horoscope. I have said that in my own case the position of Saturn, master of the Eighth House in the centre of the sky and in exact trine with the ascendant moon in its own home, Cancer, allowed the Guide, represented by Saturn, to make the contact.

Because of this natal chart the guide was able to visualise the living and spiritual forces held at her feet. In fact, while Saturn, in my chart, is situated in the centre of the sky, that is to say at its highest point, by analogy this same Saturn enables one to situate the depths of the sky, the lowest point inhabited by the guide, which in my chart would correspond to the Fourth House. In this way the point of fixation was determined, the currents passing through the guide in her state of spiritual elation. This corresponds to the *first stage, to the conception of the Germ, which is determined in principle by the fertile*

irradiation of the Word. In short, this point sees the birth of the *pre-matter* whose source is in the absolute principle, defined by the Word and fertilised by successive exteriorisations. These enable the principle to pass to the radical essence. This, in turn, will undertake the process of multiplication inherent in the genesis of life.

At precisely this moment the Guide, in contact with a higher spiritual plane, was inspired by the operation's presiding divinity. Through the power of the Word, the Guide perceived the living colours which, in the form of globes, were fixed under her feet for the entire duration of the first magical ceremony, devised for that very end. *In this way the birth of the germ of the Germ, or pre-matter, is brought about.*

At the same time each day during the following fortnight, that is until the appearance of the new moon, when the sun crossed the upper meridian, we had to be at the designated spot so as to catch the evolution of the colours. At the end of this process the earth would be able to receive the spark of life, prime condition of the Great Work.

From then until acquisition, frequent visits to the chosen site characterised the second stage, *the stage of irradiation.* Now the externalised currents pass from Principle to Essence or the generic power of Being. The Guide was gradually able to judge the evolution of colours until the germ of the Germ became the true germ, destined to be imprisoned in the now sacred earth which we would then extract.

Raymond Lully, in his *Theory* refers to this point, comparing the preparation of the Work to the birth of a child. 'Nature', he says, 'has fixed a time for conception (the first stage), a time for gestation (the second stage) and a time for birth (the third stage). Thus the alchemist, having once fertilised the First Matter, must await the moment of birth. Once the Stone is born, he must nourish it as he would a child, until such time as it is able to bear the heat of a great fire.'

Just as the mother-to-be chooses new and varied food for herself, in order that her child might be born under the best possible conditions, so I had to watch carefully over the spot which we had chosen and encircled. Meanwhile the Guide meditated and visualised the colours, following as closely as possible the evolution of the 'philosophic embryo' which was waiting for the sun to pass from its conjunction with Saturn in Leo to its opposition in Aquarius with these same two planets. At this point things reached maturity and the moment arrived at which the Matter could favourably be extracted.

Too little attention is sometimes paid to this second stage by the adepts, particularly those not versed in the art of astrology. It is very necessary to stress that astrology constitutes one of the fundamentals in this field.

In an analogous fashion, certain spagiric preparations must be left standing for forty days in the course of their fermentation or corruption, to allow for the completion of the process. Just as the conjunction of heavenly bodies is an auspicious occasion for *collection*, so the time of the full moon, in other words the opposite, favours *separation*. For this reason, many preparations require one and a half times the interval between two new moons.

We now reach the third stage: *acquisition of the germ*. The germ, imprisoned in matter to be extracted from the ground according to the relevant magical process, is the knot which unites matter and life, the sensible world to the world of hyper-sensitivity. It is the organic cell in which is imprisoned the vital soul. The acquisition of this constitutes one of the most important operations, for every ensuing stage depends on the successful completion of this one.

As may be guessed, this process is outside the scope of the uninitiated; it is an act of high magic, accessible only to initiates and to Rosicrucians who have been prepared accordingly. Silence is usually observed, not because of the existence of some general rule but following given and known laws whose effectiveness largely depends on their

being adapted to the astral make-up of the individual participants. It is the presence or absence of a harmonic relationship between the actual positions of the stars and their positions in the seeker's birth chart which determine which operations this person may proceed with and the precautions he should observe.

It must be remembered that only when all conditions of the middle stage have been fulfilled does the germ become individualised.

The Tradition has always veiled the secret nature of all these operations from the neophyte. The tale of fighting with the Dragon to wrest from him the Philosophers Stone is nearer to legend than to reality. Many people believe that it is simply a question of a symbol dissimulating the truth. In fact, the combat between the Dragon and the adept takes place as if in a dream, for the adept is in a state of altered reality. His state of exaltation is peculiar to perception of a world different from the one we normally know. It is on this astral level that the battle takes place. There is no really sincere alchemist who, on approaching the Work, would deny this. If he keeps silent it is because the guides who have helped him have also commanded him to keep silent, or else because he lacks the vocabulary to describe the state.

Cast an eye over the Alchemists' Bible, the *Mutus Liber*,* more particularly at the first plate (see Fig. 4). You will see a curious figure there, asleep in the hollow of a little hill. In a dream he discerns the sound of an angel's trumpet, bringing him news of the Annunciation. This angel, standing on Jacob's Ladder, hears the echo of a sound made by another angel standing at the top of the ladder. It is from this angel's trumpet that the 'sound' which is eventually transmitted to the sleeper, emanates. This entire picture, encircled by a crown of roses, must be meditated upon by all who wish to enter the alchemical

* 1. *Altus*; Mutus Liber, in quo tanem tota Philosophia hermetica, figuris hierogliphiris depingitur, *Rupellae*, 1667.

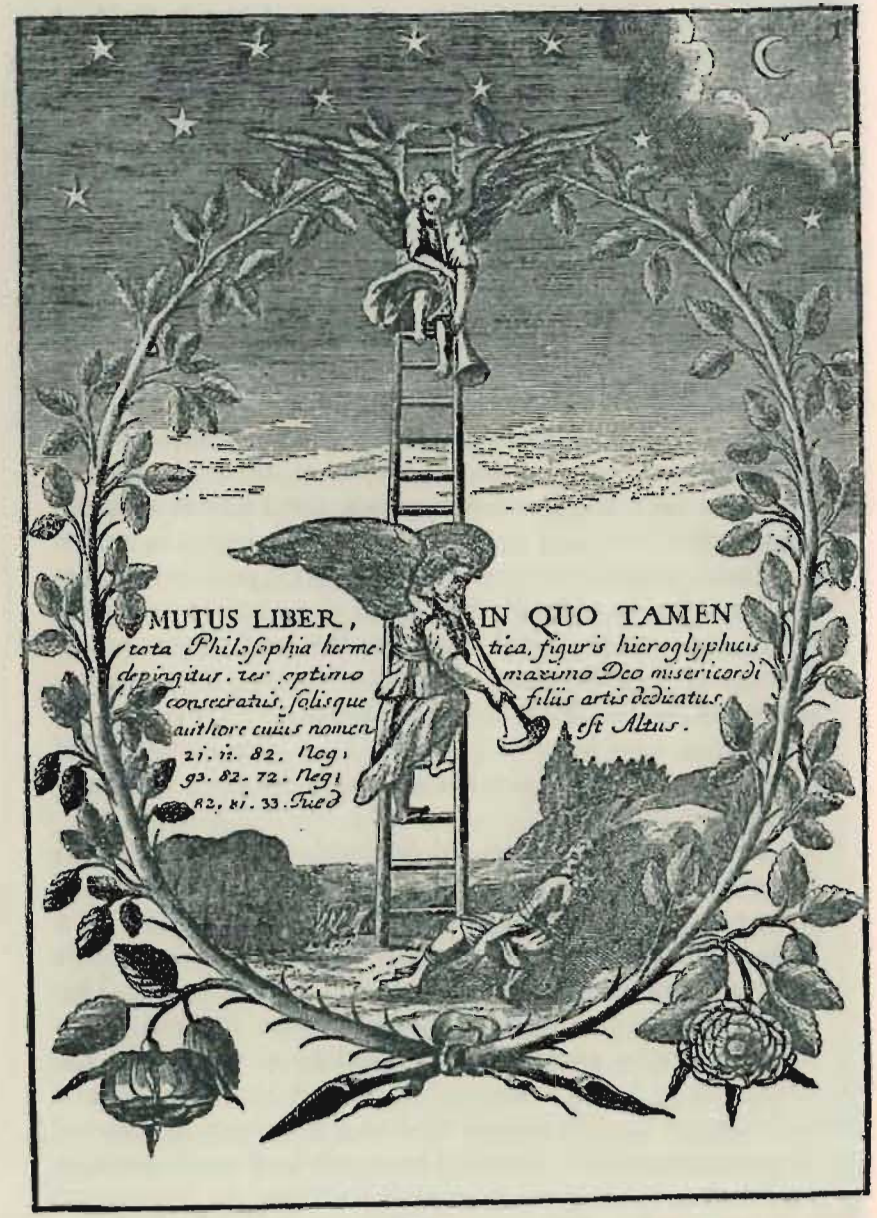


Fig. 4
Mutus Liber, Plate I

citadel. If one is not called, urged on, informed by a guide in a dream, that is, if one experiences no revelation, it is useless to embark on the great venture. It is simply that you are not ready, even though you might think you possess the necessary intellectual knowledge. In this case it is essential that knowledge be at the same level as moral and spiritual evolution. It is a kind of entrance examination, like the French Baccalaureat, where a good mark in mathematics cannot compensate for a failure in another paper; the pass mark must be reached in every case.

The next plate in the *Mutus Liber* shows the seeker's vision: on earth (the lower part of the plate) is the completed work, in the image of its celestial archetype (seen in the upper part). It follows that one must work on oneself at all levels in order to find the real way in. Once committed, one is alone on a long, hard road.

Without dwelling too long on the choice and preparation of the exact point of extraction, I want nevertheless to describe that part of the operation which constitutes the second stage mentioned above. This is the stage of irradiation, which comes between the choice of site and acquisition of the Matter.

My companion was at this time in a state of high exaltation. She existed for long periods in a trance-like condition and carried out her functions as guide in the fullest possible manner. It was she who chose the exact location for the acquisition. When she had almost reached the spot, she was ordered to take another thirteen paces forward. This she did. She had in her hand a large peasant's stick. On reaching the indicated place she threw the stick into the ground in front of her with such force that it shattered into three pieces.

From this point on I can only repeat, with complete accuracy, what she said, or the impression she conveyed to me during the days of irradiation which followed:

'A Dragon must be overcome who will show himself to be more dangerous than ever before. Only by your

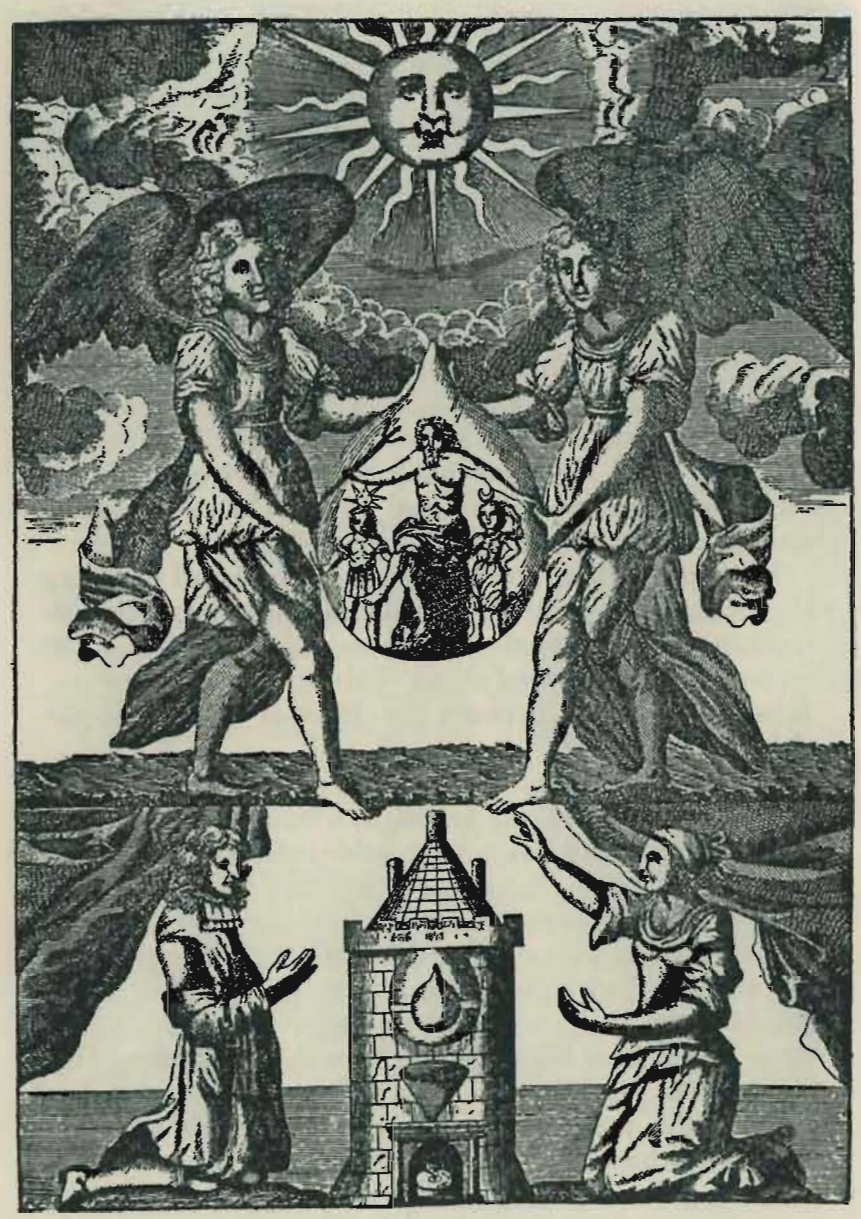


Fig. 5
Mutus Liber, Plate II

courage, your strength and your will can you succeed in slaying him. I can do nothing for you. I am there to guide you, for now you have passed victoriously the tests of your initiation . . . The Lord who is my inspiration says "You will return in three weeks".' (This alludes to the moment of revelation, to the exact time and place at which the first currents were fixed, thus conceiving the germ of the Germ.)

From this day on, she felt irresistibly attracted to the spot where the evolution of the philosophic germ was taking place. The very next day she ascertained that a change in the active mass had occurred and that it now formed a sphere. This she saw evolving, growing and changing colour—becoming green—while two currents crossed it. Foreseeing danger from outside which could threaten the life of the germ, she traced a large circle round the chosen spot, according to the teaching of magic.

It must be understood that after the revelation, whenever the medium is on the site with feet firmly on the point from which the Matter will be extracted, she has a perception of the primary colours in the shape of a ball or globe; this globe is set in the ground under the medium's feet. The succession of metamorphoses is visible only to the medium. Those not prepared see nothing.

On the second day she ascertained that there had been another transformation of the germ which was growing ever-larger. She therefore traced a second circle round the first. During the night she had a new dream in which she was being assailed from all sides, as if notice was being given that I should prepare myself for a battle. On the third day she discovered that the germ had changed in both form and colour. It now resembled a sort of foetus encircled with gold. I intensified the two magic circles and, a litle further towards the south, traced another one at a point where she presumed the existence of a vitalising current.

On the fourth day we arrived at the place in the middle of a snow storm. After having traced a third circle around the second, she set to meditating on the centre. She saw two alchemists treating a stone which was gradually transformed into gold.

This perception is all the more curious in that it took place at the beginning of our labours, at a time when our knowledge of what we should do was scant. We saw these two alchemists several times more. One of them guided the medium in those operations which were of the greatest importance by showing his laboratory to her, as if some invisible correspondence had been established between our operations and those of the alchemist.

On the fifth day, almost before she had reached the place, she saw two stars casting thousands of rays on the metallic foetus which, after passing through all the colours of the rainbow, finally became a vivid red. She saw the globe changing in the air. It took the form of a recumbent body, while the medium felt the immediate presence of the two alchemists, hard at work.

On the sixth day, she perceived a further transformation of colours. During the night she found herself, in a dream, in dreadful combat with strange animals of prehistoric appearance.

On the seventh and eighth days the battle continued against the forces defending the elements of the earth.

On the ninth day, at the actual spot where germination was taking place, she witnessed a battle between a lion and fearful beasts which were determined not to abandon the philosophic germ. Then, in the evening, a dream revealed to her a whole spectrum of colours whose source was the sun, concentrated exactly where the germ of our Matter was. She reports that she saw for the space of a minute the most beautiful colours in the world. I believe that at this moment the stone was fertilised.

On the tenth day she again saw a well-defined red globe at the chosen spot. The struggle against the forces of earth

had been completed. She calculated that she must have triumphed in seven combats.

Finally, on the eleventh day, the red globe gained steadily in power and in the heart of it two little stars threw off thousands of incredible sparks.

This continued for the next ten days until the time of extraction. The irradiation became more intense, displaying ever more vivid colours.

The foregoing will be familiar to those versed in the ways of alchemy. It was necessary, though, to underline particularly the process of irradiation. This has remained little known, because the ancient authors kept silent about it. It is equally important to note that what was revealed at this stage only acquired significance later, when results had been obtained—and this was a long way off. The Guides had simply put us on the right road, leaving us to discover the techniques and sleights of hand which, after all, were not devoid of danger, particularly that of explosion.

I want to return for a moment to the role of the female guide, as illustrated in the second plate of the *Mutus Liber*. We see her at the foot of the picture, kneeling by the side of the athenor,* head and arms upraised to explain to the man her vision of the forces above. The man keeps his head lowered to the physical world. This symbolises the two aspects of the work. The woman's presence is absolutely necessary, just as it is in everyday life, for the gestation of the child.

Through her extreme sensibility and the mobility of her own bodily fluids, the woman is to a certain extent in a favourable position to cross to higher levels and so receive instructions for her partner. His role, on the other hand, is far more earth-bound. He constructs the work on the material plane, at which level the woman stays in the

* Athenor is a word which comes from Hebrew and Arabic. It was used by alchemists of the Middle Ages to designate their furnace.

background. She stands, therefore, on the right-hand side of the arcana, the 'passive' side, the side of the psyche.

The currents showed themselves to be at maximum vitality and of most vivid colour at the new moon of February 10th, 1948. This showed that the moment of acquisition was approaching. From midnight on February 15th we prepared ourselves for this operation, continually making sure that it might be accomplished according to the rights, signs and principles which had been transmitted to us.

At midnight on February 10th we embarked on the first operation. This consisted in gauging the scale of the currents, in fixing their position and then in clearing the area around the point chosen for the extraction of the *sacred earth*. This operation was scheduled for five days later, without digging, striking or using any kind of implement on the ground. Everything had to be done by hand. Additionally, it was presupposed that we would be in a perfect state of exaltation and cleanliness, in conformity with the instructions in the traditional texts. We eliminated every possibility of pollution. Then, inside the circles, we placed the glass vessel in which the Matter would be put after extraction. All this was carried out during that moonless night, right in the heart of the old quarry which we had chosen.

I do not want to go into details of this operation, which lasted for around two hours. Suffice it to say that we had to take ritual baths and carry out minute preparations. We had also to place the capsules of sacred earth on a wooden support, so that it was raised well above the ground. We had then to purify the spot, clearing it particularly of little stones and all other elements unsuitable for the preparation of the Philosopher's Peat.

We were lucky enough that year to have an early spring. So, soon after acquiring the Matter, we were able to start collecting the first few drops of dew each morning. We moistened the Earth with this, impregnating it with the

required vital forces, then dried it. We moistened and dried alternately and as frequently as possible until we could begin collecting the first plants and herbs with which to nourish it. In doing this, we proceeded to the stage of *treatment* of the Matter. It is about this that I now want to speak.

FOUR

TREATMENT OF THE FIRST MATTER

A repeated series of operations should bring the Matter to the state of Leaven, the only state conducive to the 'opening' of gold.

Treatment of the First Matter consists of four operations.

1. Cleansing and purification of the First Matter itself;
2. Nourishing and enriching of the Matter using plants and dew;
3. Distillation, corruption and incineration of the ensuing mixture;
4. Acquisition of the Leaven and its use in 'dissolving' the Gold.

There is no doubt that all plants of a medicinal nature may be used in preparing the Philosopher's Peat; the greater the variety, the more the First Matter is enriched. There are many analogies in Alchemy which underline what I have already said: nourishing the Matter is tantamount to nourishing a child.

However, before nourishing the First Matter, one must remember to purify it, ridding it of all foreign bodies such as small stones which might find their way into it at the time of acquisition, especially if this took place on a moon-

less night. It must also be washed, and this is done by adding dew collected during the first few days of spring. Only after having carefully washed, dried and pulverised the Matter may one very gradually add to it small plants, buds and a thousand other natural items. It is important to use very young plants, full of sap and dew. This mixture is left to steep slowly at a low temperature until a deposit is formed. The mixture is then gently heated in an especially prepared alambic, ensuring that the temperature never rises above 40°C. In this way, one can begin very slowly to feed the Matter, moistening, leaving to stand in the cold, then drying and so on, without break, for weeks, months or even years, depending on the goal in sight and the method adopted. Gradually, one chooses stronger and stronger plants.

In that year, 1948, the buds burst exceptionally early and the first shoots soon appeared. Every morning, at dawn, we were out searching for the vegetable matter we required: a great variety of buds, young shoots just emerging from the ground, white flowers found on certain trees at the start of spring and so on.

Any sort of plant may be picked, but we looked above all for the truly beautiful, those which grew at random in wild areas, in the forests or the mountains and in those areas not over-populated and hence free of chemical additives.

It is better to pick very healthy, small plants than larger, apparently more beautiful specimens full of non-assimilable chemicals.

Particular importance is attached to plants which stay green for a long time, and also to pine buds and certain evergreens such as broom.

At the same time, when the weather was fine and still, we set about collecting morning dew. As will be seen, we did not exactly follow the procedure indicated in the fourth plate of the *Mutus Liber*; what we did was to choose a field of green, yet fairly stiff corn and then slide a very

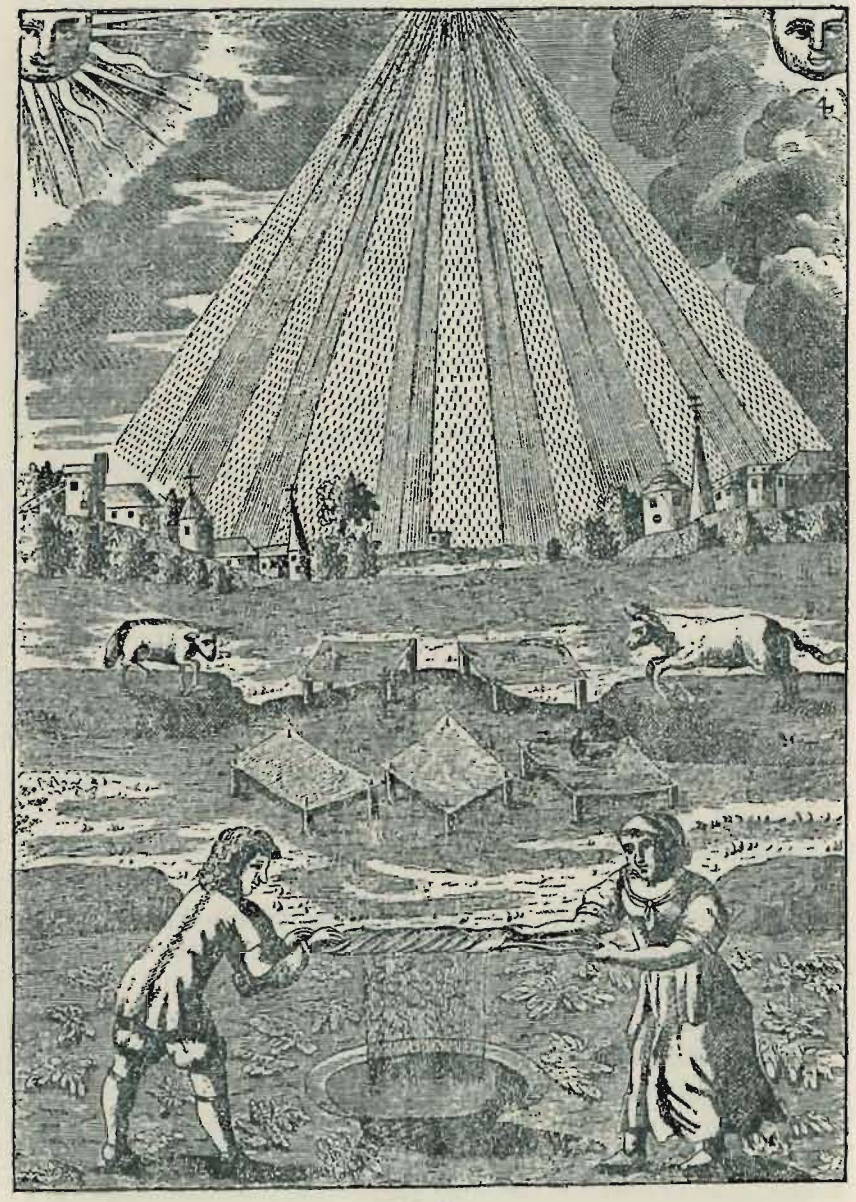


Fig. 6
Mutus Liber, Plate IV

fine yet porous canvas up and down the rows. The canvas became saturated with dew drops which formed at the tips of the plants and every twenty metres or so we would stop and squeeze the canvas out over a vessel, gaining several glasses of dew each time. The method shown in the *Mutus Liber* (lengths of canvas spread out on the grass) is definitely preferable, the dew so gathered being of a purer, more etheric composition. Our method, however, had the advantage of yielding greater quantities. After having filtered and purified this fresh dew, we steeped the buds and small plants, which we had gathered, in it. This continued from the beginning of spring until Midsummer —March 21st–June 24th, the best period for gathering these items. Sometimes we began collecting two hours before sunrise and in any case finished one hour after it. We have followed this pattern every year since. The work, however, is tricky. Some years, there have been no more than ten or fifteen days during the whole of spring when the weather has been really cloudless and still and the dew abundant and strengthened by a good aspect of the moon. Plants, green shoots, buds, small flowers and other perfectly formed dynamic elements of vegetable matter collected in this way were put into earthenware vessels.

These had previously been filled with dew and were then sealed hermetically and put into cold store.

As and when needed, the contents of the vessels were used in the following way: the vessel selected was brought to a temperature of 40°C. and kept there for forty days, so that fermentation took place and also thorough mixing together of the sap and dew. After refrigeration, the contents were put into the capsule containing the sacred Earth; the capsule was finally placed in an alambic, to bring about the process of *first digestion*—so called since plants sap and dew serve as nourishment to the Matter.

Then, gradually, the mother plants are added and rapidly digested; things become easier as the process continues, for the Matter concentrates its salts and retains the

etheric forces to an ever-increasing degree; in this way it assures itself of easy nourishment.

How each Drying Operation turns the Peat one stage blacker

We had to build for ourselves a piece of apparatus capable of holding the mixture of earth, plants and dew and to which could be added, without opening, further vital solutions of dew or other useful mixtures. In addition, we had to ensure that the preparation could safely be brought, by gentle heating, to a temperature of 40°C., so that the drying would take place. In this way the successive processes of moistening, nourishing, fermentation and drying could be accomplished in the best conditions, the earth in the vessel becoming ever-richer.

For three years we ensured the continuation of this process, thus reaching the initial stages of corruption. This was a much longer period than we had at any time envisaged. It really meant that it took three years *to achieve the first degree of corruption*, that which is seen on the surface but does not yet penetrate the whole. We were unable to work for the full twelve months of the year, for our reserves of plants and dew became exhausted, at first after five or six months, later after seven or eight. We learnt from this experience that we had to gather a larger quantity of vegetable matter than at first supposed, bearing in mind that this harvest was only feasible during the three spring months.

I think it would be useful to provide a description of one of our earliest pieces of apparatus, basically two glass containers. The bottom half holds the sacred earth, the top half is a condenser. Between the two is a conical binding of iron. The lower vessel is immersed in a pan brought to a temperature of 40°C. It has a nozzle joined to it which means that it can be fed without being opened. A second

nozzle or tube joined to the top half leads off the moisture which has condensed. This arrangement, then, allows for moistening and drying in a sealed vessel, the temperature being maintained at a steady maximum of 40°C.

No such item is to be found amongst the ancient pieces of chemical appartus; in this case it fulfils the function of the alambic as described in the *Mutus Liber*. However, it does seem probable that something similar did exist in the past, traces having been found in certain ancient texts.

John Dee, Astronomer Royal to Elizabeth I, wrote as follows around 1564: 'All generation, germination, seed growth and nutrition is nothing but the product of the reaction of the hot and the humid, both enveloping a germ animated by a spark of the unquenchable essence of life. Vegetable matter will only grow in a combination of solar heat and earthly moisture. This great law of the hot and humid, the generators of the world, is the alchemist's ultimate secret.' Following his own ideas, John Dee gave his apparatus the form of a figure of eight, the lower container representing the earth, the upper vessel the heavens. Matter can thus live, evolve and be transformed in a closed circuit. With a little imagination, one is able to grasp the nature of the process which takes place during these operations. I would add that one must ensure most carefully that the entire apparatus is hermetically sealed, for the gases given off are dangerous. It is preferable that the still be set up in an isolated and well-guarded spot. The first three years, that is from 1948 to 1952, saw our most important work; for the delicacy required, they were comparable to the care of a mother for a young child. Remember that the first years of life are the most vulnerable. A great variety of plants had to be chosen and prepared for future assimilation by being kept for forty days at 40°C. The plants had then to be mixed, pounded, dried and watched over to see that the remains fully underwent the process of corruption and so provided the sacred earth with everything it required. If, for some reason, the vegetable matter

was insufficiently digested or assimilated at the end of an operation, we had to wait, then add further quantities of dew to repeat the moistening stage, and leave the whole thing to stand for a while at a low temperature. This ensured that impregnation and internal activity were properly accomplished. Only then could reheating begin. One also had to synchronise one's actions with the great clock (i.e. the sky) since certain rhythms of the processes involved followed the phases of the moon. Thus it seemed right to us to introduce new elements at the time of a new moon, to leave everything to steep for a fortnight, then to begin heating again at the full moon. The length of time the matter was left to soak could also be increased and the entire operation set to a new cycle of forty days. In connection with this, note that numerous old texts dealing with spagiric preparations count on a period of forty days as necessary for reaching the state of corruption indispensable to the separation of mixtures.

However, what must be grasped is that the length of time varied according to the 'hardness' of the elements included. The shoots of pine trees, for instance, called for a long period of work, while the little rosy-coloured shoots, such as those found in hedges cut during winter, needed much less. Similarly, very small plants needed only a little work done on them. It is possible to encourage the process of assimilation by pounding the plants, so leaving only a thick, greenish-coloured gruel to be added to the Matter. In that case, though, one runs the risk of dispersing the etheric forces needed to maintain the vitality of the sacred earth. In our opinion, it is preferable to let nature work in her own way and not ill-treat the plants. If desired, during the autumn period one can also add fresh algae gathered from the sea. The corruption of these is more difficult to bring about, but once obtained, acts as a catalyst and allows the state of absolute black to be reached more rapidly. This process should not, however, be misused. In general terms, whilst all nature's elements should be taken

into account, particular attention must be paid to plants taken from the ground. I refer here to the directions of the Ancients: they recommended that plants be picked with the greatest possible delicacy, so that they yield their properties in toto. This, again according to the Ancients, is not possible if they have been maltreated before reaching the stage of corruption. I myself will shortly deal with this matter in detail. For a long time I thought that my operations could be speeded up if I pounded the plants before putting them into the container; however, I abandoned this method in favour of allowing nature to accomplish her own task in her own time.

It is easy to imagine how continual addition of vegetable substances leads to *blackening* of the Matter, since the corrupted organic remains mix with the earth to produce a sort of humus. But beyond this phenomenon, there is another: as one saturated the Matter with fresh dew in such a way as to leave a small excess of the latter, it became apparent that the dew was becoming intensely black, as if absorbing the floating organic residue. Very tricky operations finally yielded this black water; after it had been collected and left for a certain time, a new black matter gradually appeared as a deposit on the bottom of the vessel in which it was standing. As it increased in volume, this produced an excellent ferment for the next stage of the process. At this point I kept to the instructions given by Cyliani in his little book *Hermes Unveiled*. The method of collecting and withdrawing the black water which I found there greatly helped the internal work of corruption. After five or six years I reached the *second degree of corruption*. From this time on, the Matter began to blacken, not only on the surface as it had up till then, but right the way through. I dared to hope that I might reach the *third degree of corruption*, or Absolute Black, by following particular courses of action which experience and observation had taught me. After a while a steadily increasing quantity of whitish strands appeared at the drying stage.

These gave way to wool-like flakes, while the final distillations produced a greenish water smelling fairly strongly of ammonia. All this indicated the imminence of the third degree of corruption and the end of the first stage of the work. This indeed ought to culminate in the total incineration of the matter transformed during it.

That summarises the essential operations concerned in preparing the Philosopher's Peat. In the next stage this will become the *Leaven* which should elevate the gold to its first crown, that is to say bring into being the elixir of the first order, or first medicine. Before going any further, however, I want to discuss several points relating to the gathering of plants.

Acquisition of Mother Plants

In his work entitled *Herbarius*, A. Delatte has assembled a whole range of information on the ceremonial which the Ancients used in gathering both ordinary plants and also those reputed to be magical. Ovid describes with meticulous care the rites observed by Medea when she undertakes to rejuvenate her father Eson: the essential task consists not in discovering plants whose juices will replace the old man's worn-out blood, but rather in choosing a day when there is a full moon and in carrying out complicated instructions. She turns round three times on her own axis, sprinkles herself with water drawn from a river, gives vent to the three-fold ritual cry, and so on. It is not the plants themselves which one seeks to acquire but the properties which they conceal and which the egregoric divinities retain. Ovid, and also Sophocles who describes the same scene, insists that a sickle of brass be used. A great deal of literature on this subject has reached us from antiquity but even so, this is only a fraction of what was available to the Ancients themselves.

In any case, correspondences between plants and astro-

logical signs have long inspired books, attributed amongst others to Hermes Trismegistus, Solomon, Ptolemy and Alfred the Great. The *Herbarius* contains a whole host of information and references for each plant. These have been very precious to me and will usefully be referred to again in the completion of the next stages, even though the author, concerned exclusively with plants, does not add that the most important thing is to mix them with sacred earth, thus fulfilling the law in the *Emerald Tablet*: 'The earth shall be its wet-nurse.'

Here is a summary of the rules which should be followed when acquiring mother plants. These are basic plants which yield not only their sap and juices but also the vital, life-giving fluid whose energy value will be crystallised in our preparations. This, hopefully, will provide them with the expected medicinal power.

1. *Qualities of purity and cleanliness; the Herbalist's knowledge*

It is not enough, as one might think, to have a knowledge of the plants and of their special properties. The herbalist must be initiated into a knowledge of all the phenomena of the natural world and be aware of the two-fold nature —physical and psychic—of plants. To do this, he has to be of an evolved nature and to be healthy and right-living. He has to possess particular gifts of perception and sensibility so that he not only sees a plant but perceives its power, its psychic vigour and the intensity of its vital fluid. The herbalist must therefore often undergo self-purification, withdrawing from impure contacts, so that he finds himself to some extent in a 'state of grace' as he confronts nature and the spiritual forces which radiate over all her kingdoms. The methods of purification vary according to the birth charts of those concerned. Some take ritual baths, others do breathing and yoga exercises, others again

practise meditation and isolate themselves from the outside world. Whatever the circumstances, the aim is to develop the pyschic personality and the capacity to come out of oneself.

One must, of course, avoid the trap set by the forces of evil who seek to take over the vital fluid and vampirise it for their own ends. It is doubtless always dangerous to make contact with life—whether human, animal, vegetable or even mineral.

One has only to read certain books on alchemy to discover the symbols which relate to all this: the danger which exists in trying to secure the First Matter is represented by combat between the Adept and the Dragon who guards it. The symbolism of the earth is equally valid for plants, whose nourishment comes from the earth. The simple act of picking plants, as we do every day, is only free of danger because the vital fluid which they contain returns to the earth at the very moment they are picked.

2. *The choice and preparation of plants*

As far as the preparation of our elixir is concerned, the essential is to obtain mother plants from outside those areas soiled by man and by chemical agents. One looks for plants in clearings, along little used paths and in a variety of places exposed to the rising sun. During walks in these places, the herbalist learns to recognise a plant as robust and vigorous, capable of yielding a very large quantity of the sought-after universal fluid.

As soon as he spots such a plant, he approaches it and begins to free it from any grass or branches which might be interfering with it. Next he encircles it, that is he traces round it a symbolic circle which marks out the area granted to him. He then purifies it of any element which could jeopardise the operation. It is common to find herbalists speaking to plants as to beings endowed with

judgement and sensibility. As soon as it has been located, the plant is shown what is expected of it. It is ordered to draw greater force from the ground and incorporate this into itself, so that the force may subsequently be available to the herbalist. Really what is occurring is an operation to make contact, a magical operation which can only be carried out by qualified individuals.

The initiate will often return to this place, gauging how things are coming along, experiencing the power which is present, moving aside plants which might get in the way of the one he has chosen. Other plants could also exhaust the forces which he counts on concentrating round this elected one. He will discover the astrological affinities of this plant and the nature of its spiritual forces and harmonise with them so as to acquire them. He will also, of course, choose a variety of plants which he will remove from the ground without ceremony and as occasion dictates, to augment the vital, nutritious element of his preparations. The leaven requires varying amounts of plants, sap and dew for its making. Finally, when he knows the day and hour at which acquisition is to be made, the alchemist will install a makeshift piece of apparatus allowing him to gain the vital forces of the plant without touching it with his fingers and without the plant touching the ground. Here, too, several sleights of hand known only to the specialist are involved. One can, for example, take a bush growing near the chosen plant but outside the circle, bend it over and attach it to the plant by a cord. In this way the roots of the plant may be freed as the bush is allowed to straighten up, finally drawing the whole plant with it. The adept will then plunge the plant into an earthenware vessel of dew standing well off the ground.

Touching the plant is judged to be inauspicious. There is a risk that the vital fluid will return to the ground, since the human body is a conductor. The resultant discharge could have unfortunate results on the organism. This is why it is preferable to make use of the bush, or of some

piece of flexible equipment serving the same purpose. All this must be prepared before the chosen plant is extracted. It will soon be seen why the operation can only take place at dawn, in the silence of nature and away from all external intervention.

3. *Preparation of the recipient vessel and of the First Water in which the plant is soaked and broken down*

The aim is to prepare a vessel for the plants so that collection can be made of the vital fluid. This is then used to prepare the elixir. One's preference will be for a vessel of baked clay or glass. It is essential that it can be sealed hermetically. The required liquid is dew, gathered from the grass at daybreak on a spring morning. A propitious day is decided upon by consideration of astral details. In addition, the day should be perfectly cloud-free. Great vigilance must therefore be shown at every moment, for even in spring the good days are sometimes few and far between.

Just as there exists a whole tradition of cures using plants, so one finds through the ages a whole mythology attached to dew. In his book *Deux logis alchimiques*, Eugène Canseliet, though judging that the fourth plate of the *Mutus Liber* is to be taken symbolically, gives abundant documentation of the hermetic significance of dew. In his *Revelations cabalistiques d'une medecine universelle tiree du vin* (1735) Dr. Gosset explains how he extracts the 'salts of dew' according to the method of Van Helmont and uses them in his medicines. He also mentions the ancient Egyptians; he says that the women used to bathe in morning dew to make their breasts firm and to get rid of their stretch marks.

There are many ways of collecting dew. The most traditional and the best is that described in the *Mutus Liber*: lengths of canvas are fixed by stakes above the grass during

the time of Aries or Taurus. Their symbols are the two animals who preside over the collection of dew. The canvas soaks up the fine droplets which form at the tips of the blades of grass and which generally evaporate when the sun rises above the horizon. Once this canvas has been impregnated, it is squeezed into a vessel in which the mother plant will be put. One can also do as I do and drag lengths of canvas over the grass. This has the disadvantage, though, of mixing certain impurities with the dew, which have then to be separated out. One must also see that the dew collected on the cloth does not touch the ground, or all etheric forces will immediately return to earth. The specialists are well aware of these precautions but there is little mention of them. In any case, all the above operations must be carried out before the gathering of the plants with medicinal properties.

4. *Establishing the exact moment to acquire a plant and its vital fluid*

One must observe nature and be able to read her secret book in all its aspects if one is to find the exact moment when the chosen plant—prepared, energised and ready to yield its properties—will be at its most powerful. Once this moment is known, the lifting of the plant can be carried out under the best possible conditions.

Generally speaking, this moment occurs at sunrise. The sap is then in full spate, particularly in spring time. Choose a really fine day, free of cloud and astrologically favourable. The law of analogy must always be observed and so on the day preceding the extraction of the plant, the herbalist should visit the spot and arrange the next day's meeting with it. At the same time he should retrace the circle designed to banish impurities. He will then perform the customary acts of purification, putting himself into a completely receptive state, so that the operation may pro-

ceed as laid down. The dew will have been collected as recently as is practicable, the vessel got ready and placed on a stand isolating it from the ground. The stand should also be sealed with a circle.

5. *The nature of the offerings*

As a rule, when one pulls a plant out of the ground the vital fluid involved in its life process returns to the earth, just as, on the death of a human being the soul returns to purgatory to be purified. But when one carries out an operation such as the one we have described, taking over both the physical and psychic energies of a plant, it is possible to retain that which would normally return to the ground. Furthermore, it is possible to do this without producing an imbalance in the life surrounding the chosen plant. In books on magic one finds mention of gnomes and astral entities which seek to vampirise the vital fluid. So that these entities, whether or not they really exist, should not manifest themselves, grain is smeared with honey and inserted in the hole in the ground from which the plant has been removed. This is called the offering, in a sense an exchange designed to maintain an equilibrium of forces and to allow the operation to proceed under the best fluidic conditions. Some experimenters go so far as to put grain round the outline of the sealing circle, to keep the attention of the earth elements. Personally, I think that one should try and avoid falling into base magical practices.

6. *Acquisition of the Mother Plant*

The plant must be one which is sensitised to a high degree and with sap in full spate. Choose a fine, clear day. The vessel, the dew and the grain are offered to nature. The herbalist, in a state of grace, will have devised a way of

uprooting the plants without touching them by hand. All the foregoing should be prepared before entering the circle. Once inside, the herbalist will prepare his own psyche and intone the ritual incantations. Then he will free the roots, preferably with a wooden object, being careful not to damage them. Slowly he will see the plant straighten up. Only at the moment when the bending of the bush causes the plant to lose contact with the ground will he introduce the compensating grain. He will then manipulate the plant so that it can be put into the dew-filled capsule. He will detach the plant, close up the capsule and retire, the operation complete. If the operator possesses special faculties, or if he is helped by a companion who does, he or she will, on the sublunary plane, see all that is forbidden to the uninitiated. In this way he will learn whether or not his operation has been blessed with success.

So that the plant may live and increase its concentration of material elements (sap, juices, chlorophyll etc.), the next step is to gather little plants from all around as required to fill the vessel and produce a compact mass of vegetable matter for subsequent operations. This last step is carried out in the same conditions as before but without special ceremony since the experimenter is now sufficiently sensitised to obtain both plant and vital elements.

This sequence of operations is repeated as often as necessary, according to the importance of the task to be accomplished.

7. *Sealing the vessel hermetically and leaving it to stand*

Once one or more vessels, each containing a mother plant and filled with dew and other compressed plants, has been obtained, a certain quantity of leaven is introduced. As has been seen, the leaven is a preparation drawn from earth and certain minerals. The vessel is next sealed hermetically

and placed over a gentle heat which maintains it at a temperature of 40°C. for at least forty days. Note that this stage may last for varying lengths of time but that the details never change. It is essential that the vessel is not in contact with the ground for, as always, there is a risk that the vital fluid will return there.

Some authors fear what they describe as the phenomenon of 'demagnetisation'. Only later, during the summer, does one reach the drying stage. It is in any case always possible at this time to moisten the preparation with reserves of dew or rain water, or else with the contents of vessels which have been filled with plants and dew but not leaven. One should measure the quantity of leaven to be prepared or regenerated by the stage of preparation reached. One uses many more plants than one might at first suppose. One thing is certain: without the presence of leaven it is impossible to produce a preparation with any degree of stability. The leaven is in a sense the material support destined to be enriched by the vegetable matter. What is more, if the vegetable matter nourishes the leaven by enriching it with its own vital substances, the leaven in its turn dissolves the spiritual element of the gold which will later be placed in coction with it to produce the first elixir.

I now want to give certain details of the way in which the final coctions are produced.

8. *The Final Coctions*

Coctions have traditionally posed the seeker many problems. I arrived at my present method only after long experimentation.

The preparation, in twelve test tubes, is put into a circular hot air oven. A thermostat ensures that the temperature remains between 150° and 200°C., so that the preparation may boil and rhythmic vibration take place without risk

of explosion. (This has in fact been my misfortune several times.)

The tubes should be approximately 300 mm long and have a diameter of between 27 and 30 mm. About 20 mm of ash is put into the bottom of the tube and this is then covered with 25–30 mm of dew. Around 2½ grammes of powdered gold is added to each tube at the outset. As a rule, the powdered gold is about 10 per cent of the weight of the ash.

The successive periods of boiling should each last approximately four hours and should alternate with four hours off the heat. If boiling lasts more than four hours, the ash forms into balls or in some way binds together and the coction becomes ineffectual.

In practice I work with 24 tubes, 12 in and 12 out of the oven at any one time, so that the fire never stops. During the rest period, the ash softens again and I shake the tubes regularly to ensure that the preparation is always uniformly viscous.

The tops of the tubes stick out of the oven quite a long way and are permanently cooled by air currents; the vapours are thus condensed and any over-pressurisation avoided.

Each tube is sealed with a rubber stopper kept in place by a clip. In addition, the tube is supported on a perforated disc which allows the base to enter the oven without friction. This precaution is essential, for experience has shown that otherwise the base is worn out fairly quickly by the action of the salts and the powder which attack the glass.

In addition, it should be noted that the salts must be entirely eliminated from the final preparation. For this reason the vegetabilised liquor of gold is left to mature for a certain time. Any excess salts—it is in fact rare to find any—will be deposited. The tradition states quite clearly that the liquor must be left to stand a certain time so that it may clarify. The powder, on the other hand, must be used immediately after incineration, so that the salts are

taken at maximum strength. They may otherwise lose effectiveness by that phenomenon which alchemists of former times called 'demagnetisation'.

Really, the art of alchemy consists here in choosing tubes which are not too wide, thus avoiding caking and lumping of the powder and the attendant hardening, and also tubes long enough to allow normal condensation, so avoiding the risk of explosion. It also consists in finding the ideal mode of heating. It must be sufficiently gentle to produce regular but not excessive boiling. My eventual rhythm consisted of alternating four hours of heating with four hours of cooling. I repeat this seven times when the gold is new and three or four times when the tube contains half gold residue and half new gold. If the ash is particularly rich in salts, indicating its pH value, it may be used for two or three coctions. This is done by decanting the top part carefully after the tube has stood for some hours.

There is one additional point not without importance: take some ash which has previously been used to 'open' gold and which might therefore be thought to be *exhausted* and then submit it to a supplementary series of operations. Start with a new corruption, *carried further* by the addition of sap and dew, then proceed to an incineration *longer than before and at a higher temperature*, finishing up with a further coction, also at a higher temperature. These powders which one thought finished reproduce a new liquor of gold without the addition of further metal. There is, of course, a limit to these temperature increases. If the heating is carried to excess, the ash forms into a solid mass and becomes unusable. There is also a risk of explosion at extreme temperatures.

In search of the First Degree Elixir of long life.

Collecting plants *(previous page)*. Just before sunrise, as with the collection of dew, one uproots the chosen plants (the choice is made the previous day).

Mixing earth and plants *(above)*. The vat of the alambic is filled with earth to be regenerated (its vitality was removed during the previous coctions); to it are added the plants which will bring it their life force.

Adding the dew. The dew, which has previously been filtered, is added to the earth and plants. This produces a sort of soup, which is then put under the alambic.

Regenerated peat. After several months' work heating and moistening the matter in the alambic one takes out a black substance which has assimilated

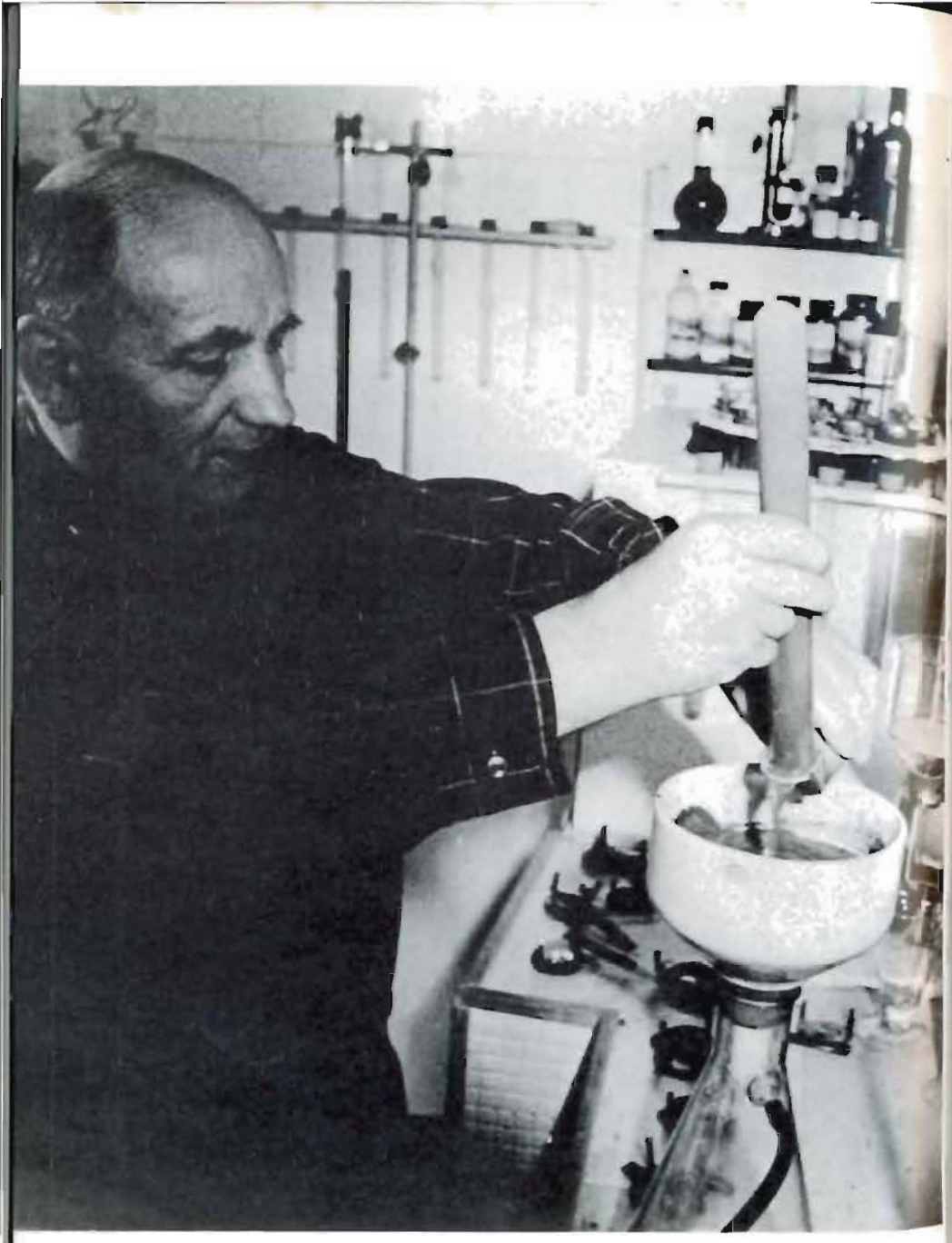
Sifting. To eliminate the impurities which have found their way into the plants and have not been reduced in incineration, the ashes are sifted. A mask is worn, because the salts they contain are very volatile and can be harmful.

Preparation of coctions. In the bottom of the test-tubes is a quantity of regenerated ash, covered by an equal depth of distilled dew. At this point Armand Barbault added the powdered gold.

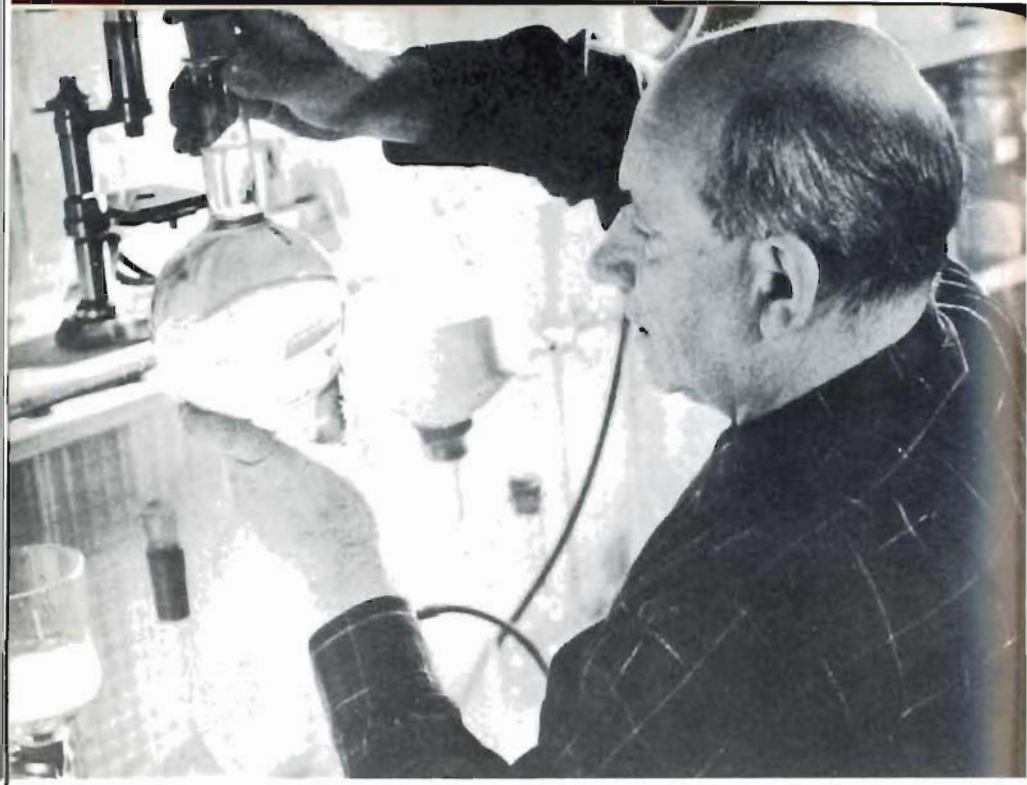
the plants; this is called the 'regenerated peat'. It is put to blacken in the sun.

Incineration. Once the peat is fully dried out it is freed from any remaining deposits of carbon by incinerating it in an oven at a temperature of between 700 and 800°C. This operation takes several hours. Thus are obtained the ashes containing the vegetable salts.

Putting the test-tubes into a circular oven with twelve apertures. The test-tubes are heated for four hours, then left to stand for four hours. This process is repeated seven times. The tops of the test-tubes protrude from the oven, assisting condensation of the vapours and regulating the pressure in the tubes.



Filtering the coctions. The coctions are filtered to retrieve the liquors and the earth, now liberated of its salts.



Finally, the liquor of Gold. The liquor is examined over a period of a week, to make sure it is entirely pure.

FIVE

OUR SPAGIRIC PREPARATION AND TRADITIONAL TEACHING

Our preparation is produced by following the philosophic process which deals with the 'first part' of the Great Work as described in traditional alchemy.

The phenomenon of corruption has the following effect on the matter: it brings about the separation of mixtures, allowing the life forces to become fixed in the salts formed from incineration. In this way the life forces are made assimilable by the human body, since all the elements involved in the preparation are by nature vegetable.

What name should be given to this preparation?

Ancient texts dealing with this subject speak of *potable gold*, beloved of Paracelsus and his precursors and supposedly endowed with the power of curing all ills and increasing life-span. But however much this potable gold has been spoken of, no experimenter with an interest in alchemy has yet been able to prepare it.

Other authors mention *vegetable gold*, *flowers of gold*, or *quintessence*, again without details as to how one might set about preparing them. When I began my work, I thought I would be concerned with potable gold, but in the

strict sense of the term this opinion had soon to be abandoned, since spectrum analysis showed no trace of gold in my preparation. The experiment, however, is explicit: if, after the phase of incineration, I take some virgin powder and make a coction of it in a bath of dew, there is no manifestation of gold colour, even after many hours of coction. The water, once deposited, adopts a greenish tinge, and is alkaline in nature, with a pH of between 11 and 12. If the experiment is then repeated, but with the addition of a few grammes of powdered gold, when the mixture is put into a bath of dew the liquid takes on a gold colour after a few hours of coction.

It must therefore be admitted that a change takes place between the two experiments, if only a colour change. I have put the matter to various scientists but they can give me no explanation of the phenomenon. Other people, imbued with theosophic or anthroposophic conceptions, have assured me that this was perfectly normal, that the gold was transported straightway from the physical to the etheric plane and indeed that this is the origin of the gold's therapeutic properties. It must be stressed, they say, that certain new illnesses which seem impervious to modern medical treatment in fact have their source in the etheric body. Therefore, it is probable that this gold-based alchemical medicine has positive effects, since the preparation transfers the specific medicine to the etheric level. However, I must say that, satisfying as they are, these thoughts by no means express the certainty that I feel deep within me. I cannot forget what the alchemists, especially Raymond Lully, affirm—that as well as a body, gold has a *soul*. Further, they acknowledge that the soul of gold is its colour and that it is this which contains all the therapeutic properties of the metal. The colour of the gold passes into my liquor, even if chemical analysis and spectrum examination reveal no bodily trace of the metal. It is my vegetabilisation of the gold which extracts the soul from it and makes it assimilable.

I personally think that this preparation really is what spagirists call *vegetable gold* or *vegetabilised gold*. The energy which makes possible on the one hand the action of the dissolving powders on the metallic gold, and on the other the regeneration of the used powder, comes from vegetable matter. By the same token, the preparation may safely be taken, a few drops at a time. It will be assimilated easily for, like the vegetables at its source, it contains nothing toxic.

From my own point of view, the way in which I prepared the peat and the obstination with which I sought to capture the forces of physical and etheric life offer an analogous explanation for the existence of the above properties. When I had completed my preparation, the spiritual Guides who helped me breathed several times in the finely attuned ear of my collaborator. They spoke the word 'exoephilline'. This word, it was stressed, is compounded of *exoe*, meaning kernel or nucleus and *philline*, meaning water. My preparation could therefore be considered as nucleus medicine and as such suitable for the treatment of all illnesses of cells, particularly of the blood.

Beyond this, it does not matter whether it be potable, vegetable or vegetabilised gold or even exoephilline. What does matter is to establish the exact properties which the preparation possesses. To do this, I shall once more turn to astrology and to the laws of analogy.

How the Adept's birth chart determines the way in which the Preparation shall be used

If someone spends twenty years bringing a chosen creation into existence, that creation will undoubtedly possess the characteristics of the creator's astrological chart. To arrive at a true understanding of the spagiric preparation, one must interpret the alchemist's horoscope. Let us return to my birth chart (fig. 1).

Following what has been said earlier about the predominant influence of Saturn, here situated in the centre of the sky between 9 and 10 degrees of Pisces, one is tempted to say that Saturn, in contact with the spiritual at the top of the sky and also in harmony with the female collaborator and spiritual guide, governs the preparation.

From this is would seem at first sight that it would be what the ancients called an *Extract of Saturn* or *Spirit of Saturn*. Notice in passing that this latter is not the same as the common *spirit of salt*—nitric acid—used by chemists for material purposes. Though the Spirit of Saturn attacks pure metals, it does so on a level higher than the physical.

Spirit of Saturn, in sum, is the liquor drawn from the coction, possessing no trace of metallic gold.

In conformity with its nature, the Spirit of Saturn works slowly. Its action is penetrating and activating. The presence of Saturn in Pisces indicates long-term rather than spectacular results.

Uranus is in the eighth house of Saturn and since the former star is master of Aquarius, Saturn receives the necessary external contribution of etheric force to support its work. In addition, Saturn is in trine with the moon and Neptune. These planets, placed in the ascendant, confirm the slow, penetrating nature of the action. Compare the process of establishing the optimum dose through drop by drop addition. The Spirit of Saturn is indeed administered as follows: several drops are taken in half a glass of water, preferably on waking. In this way Saturn operates through the trine between it and the moon. Its action is comparable to that of water which, falling drop by drop on a certain stone, eventually hollows out the latter. The action is slow and continuous and the body never reaches tolerance. Neptune, master of Pisces, in which Saturn is found, is ruled by the moon which, situated in Cancer, is in its favourite position and has at its disposal this same Neptune, which is also in Cancer. Additionally, the sign of Cancer, home of the moon and of Neptune, has Saturn,

which is in Pisces, at its disposal. In the chain of successive combinations, it can be said that the moon has available to it all the elements, and these are particularly effective since the moon, at 14 degrees of Cancer, is in conjunction with the fixed star Sirius, the most important in the sky.

Each drop of the preparation, symbolised by the moon, is therefore highly effective and the fact of adding several specks of gold to the coction defines the transportation taking place in the combination. This is due to the square which the moon makes with the sun in Aries, for the gold is symbolised by the sun. The gold is thus transported or transmuted to a totally different level. The Spirit of Saturn is ennobled on contract with the metallic gold and becomes the gold panacea with which we are concerned.

The square of Saturn on Jupiter 'exiled' in Gemini, confirms in addition that we have here an illegal medicine, i.e., one which does not form part of the official corpus, and whose slow action will gain recognition only with time.

There are further analogous observations: Saturn rules time but also old age; the use of drops of the Spirit of Saturn in combination with gold can contribute to the regeneration of tissue worn by time and the prolongation of life. Consistent use of the liquor should therefore considerably extend the life span. It should be made clear that its use is reserved for those who identify with the spirit of Saturn. It is not for those who think that, by following a certain course of treatment, they will be enabled to go on leading a disorganised life. In this instance a medicine extracted from the Spirit of Jupiter is indicated.

In this horoscope, nearly all the planets are to be found in spring signs, between Saturn in Pisces and the moon in Cancer. It is at this time of year, therefore, that the alchemist will go in search of his natural raw materials.

These observations are clear evidence of a link between the alchemist's birth chart and the method he must adopt in making and in using his elixirs.

The Tradition represents the great work as consisting of Three Parts; here we are concerned only with the First

It goes without saying that I put my liquor through lengthy tests at the hands of qualified doctors in order to judge its therapeutic powers. I shall return to this point, but it now seems necessary to me to explain how this preparation was first conceived of and then brought into being. To do this, I must choose between many different modes of expression, always with the aim of being understood by contemporary minds. To use alchemical terminology seems to be just as risky as using modern terms. Instead, I prefer to use analogies concerned with observation of the natural world, notwithstanding my long acquaintance with the language of alchemy. In fact, to make clear my ideas I shall in any case deal briefly with the subject, showing how the hermetic philosophers of the Middle Ages themselves reasoned about these problems and arrived at an understanding of their work.

To make any advances at all in this field, one must forget all one has learnt or thought to have learnt in books and rebuild one's culture by direct experience based simultaneously on understanding of the great book of nature and on personal study of the traditional sciences. In this way, observation goes hand in hand with study. As far as the latter is concerned, one soon comes to understand that adherence to the dicta of the Tradition, much more than attempts at innovations, is called for. The Tradition is based on perfectly valid data which is found at the source both of astrology and the Quabalah. Both of these should be studied. Like the ancients, one must conceive of the universe as a function of the correspondences between macrocosm and microcosm. One should maintain an ardent and unreserved faith in the Divine, meditate, isolate and purify oneself, live an exemplary life and shun the impure contacts and temptations which turn a neo-

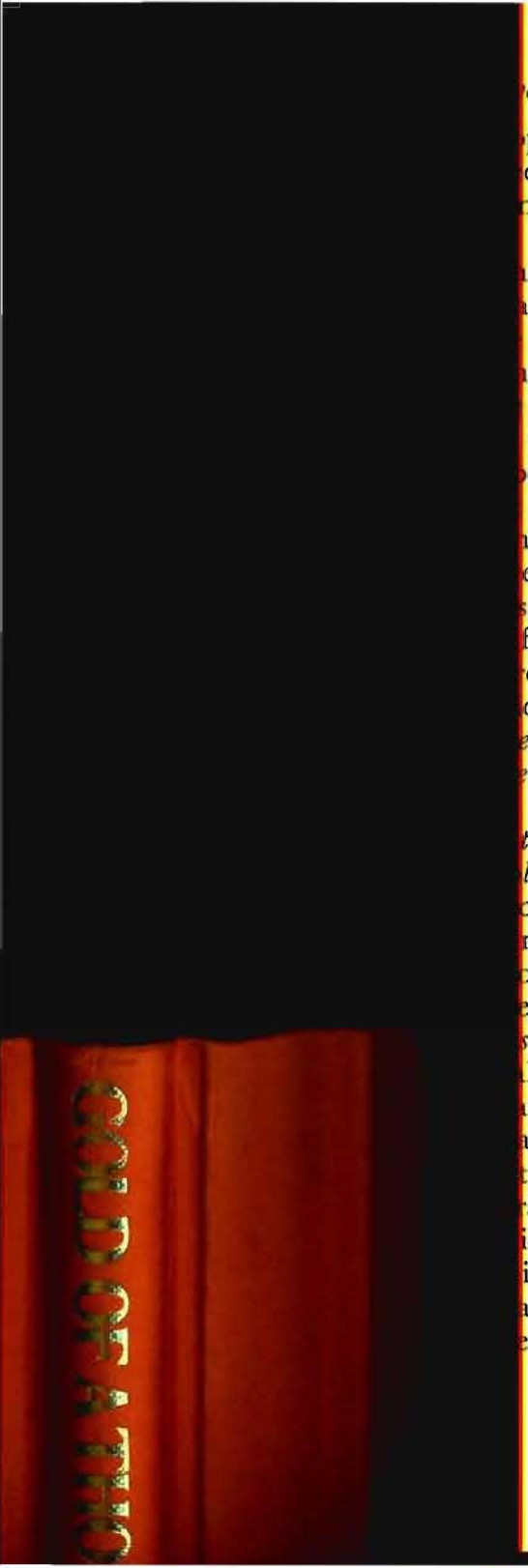
phyte away from the truth. This preparation takes years. Truth must be separated from falsehood and superstition avoided. Above all, it is essential to have a thorough understanding of the relationship between the various combinations in nature, whether binary, tertiary or quaternary. Finally, one must know of the correspondences between the planets, nature and man. An example is the link between various planets and various organs of the body.

Paracelsus, father of spagiric medicine, teaches that correspondence exists between the sun and the heart, the moon and the stomach, Mercury and the nervous system, Venus and the glands, Jupiter and the liver and Saturn and the bones. Working on these links, the ancients successfully treated specific organs with medicines composed of metals and other minerals, linked by the intermediary of the planets. This was quite separate from the preparation we are primarily concerned with here. The sun, for instance, corresponds to the heart and to gold.

The metallic counterparts of the other planets are as follows:

The moon and silver; Mercury and mercury; Venus and copper; Mars and iron; Jupiter and tin; Saturn and lead. In the same way, the ancients considered the Earth to be linked to antimony. They produced many preparations from antimony which were designed to eliminate general weakness due to excessive earth influence.

The influences must further be arranged in some sort of hierarchy, so that it may be seen on what level each operates. Thus preparations produced at the seven-fold level operate on a lower plane than elixirs hermetically prepared according to the processes of the Great Alchemical Work. Use of these elixirs in association with the specific medicine for a given organ will endow the medicine with a bonus of energy, allowing it to work more effectively. Doctors versed in these matters often produce associations with felicitous results. The ancient doctrine '*similia similibus curantur*' (like cures like) has, it should be



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that it is no way dangerous and can be prescribed for as long a period of time as desired. In cases of long standing illness, its effects are slow but progressive and its use can be combined happily with that of specific remedies. Having said this, a question arises from the affirmations of Paracelsus. Is our process not susceptible to producing even more subtle liquors by further coction, in a new tube and with the addition of new gold? I have tried this. During the rhythmic movement produced in the new coction, it might be thought that the liquor is becoming further impregnated by the gold and that its effectiveness will reach to even higher levels, acting, for example on the brain and spinal cord. However, the conclusion reached by doctors using our preparation is that tinctures of a highly metallic nature are less valuable than those vegetabilised from the first degree. It would not appear advisable to follow the path of increasing metallisation.

The chief secret of this preparation is in the transmutation which takes place partly by the separating out of the vital forces of the gold and partly by their reintroduction into the vegetable solvent. This renders them assimilable by the human body.

In general, the human body can digest vegetable but not mineral substances. This is the reason for vegetabilising the quintessence of metals, so producing elixirs which meet therapeutic requirements.

According to Paracelsus and a whole body of other ancient authors, there is a hierarchy of power and importance in the range of elixirs prepared by spagirists. However, none of them has left understandable details of his preparations. Rosicrucians, supposed to be the last possessors of this knowledge, have never transmitted any of it to the uninitiated. Study of good alchemical texts, though, does reveal that there are two degrees of universal medicine.

Medicine of the first order is what we have reconstituted. It is drawn from the *blood of the green lion*. The

energy-providing constituents of this medicine come from grass, plants and dew gathered in the fields—from *nature's green table. It is vegetabilised gold of the first order*, also called exoephilline.

Medicine of the second order becomes effective much more quickly and spectacularly. This is doubtless because regeneration takes place from ten to a hundred times more quickly. It is this that the ancients called the *Great Elixir, potable gold*, the *superior medicine*. This is drawn from the *blood of the red lion* and in this case metallic elements come much more into play. I shall mention this again later.

It is further said that the medicine of the first order attacks the first crown of gold while that of the second attacks the second crown. It should be added that this in no way excludes the possibility of a medicine of the third order with its source in the alchemist's powder of projection, attacking the third and last crown of gold. Only very few texts make mention of this; in general there is absolute silence about the matter.

It is probable that people of the great Egyptian civilisation knew of these different orders and applied them to different classes in society. In this way the élites were assured of a longer life, perfect health, and a body which was preserved after death. In the present work, concerned chiefly with medicine of the first order, we will deal with various spagiric preparations which have been used in curing the classic illnesses. Tradition asserts that each one of these, and also each organ of the body, is under the sway of one particular planet. The fact that the metallic and vegetable elements making up the medicines are also ruled by this or that planet shows the process of analogy at work.

One thing should be made clear at this point. The First Matter chosen for our work, work concerned with preparing the initial bases of spagiric medicine, does not correspond exactly with that used by the ancient alchemists in the preparation of the Philosopher's Stone.

This latter, along with the powder of projection, had the property of transmuting base metals into gold. It should be made clear that the 'elements' drawn from nature vary to some little degree. At times, other substances must be added to them. These, too, are impregnated with their quintessences. However these questions do not really concern us here and we are not qualified to discuss them.

There is a connection between our work and the Great Work of Alchemy. Our preparation has an exact correspondence with the 'first part of the philosophy'. All three parts of the philosophy are involved in the completion of the Great Work. In addition, the preparation of the First Matter, the composition of the Philosopher's Peat and the gradual preparation of the Leaven leading to the stage of Initial Perfection are analogous to the processes involved in the Great Work. This is because of the corruption and incineration which takes place at each stage.

Our task is limited by circumstances. Humanity is threatened with total destruction by atomic radiation, whether as the result of war, or through progressive accumulation of dangerous atomic waste. It is our duty to lay the foundations of a medicine which, in further stages of development, will be capable of fighting the action of disintegration of atoms in living cells. There is nothing in the world to encourage greater production of gold than is achieved by current means. A greater or lesser amount of gold could make no contribution to the happiness of mankind, nor could it relieve suffering. We may therefore be excused if we do not seek those incommunicable secrets of the alchemists concerned with obtaining gold.

We are not concerned, either, with producing the Great Medicine in large-scale, industrial quantities. The modern methods of mass production would soon render it useless, by virtue of the extreme fragility of the solvent powders.

Those who set out to discover the First Matter as one might go in search of a reef of gold, then subject it to ultimate outrage in the laboratory, will never find the key

to the Great Work. They hope to find the four elements of nature amongst material elements, in gas, fire, minerals and liquids which are, to a greater or lesser degree, corrosive. In fact the four are never found outside the element earth. Such people will never find the means of capturing the universal fluid which surrounds them, which they breathe yet do not retain. They are even less able to condense this so as to produce the energy source which they require. They will be involved in a purely material laboratory experiment, more or less dangerous, more or less profitable and ultimately entirely without success. These are the people whom the adepts of long ago called *puffers*, doubtless because they were used by them only to operate the bellows found in each alchemical laboratory.

It goes without saying that knowledge of chemical processes is not enough. One must fit in with the traditional teaching. Now that we have achieved the medicine of the first order, we are convinced, on reflection, that it could have been done more quickly and more easily. Such reflection is valueless, though, for all our trials and experiments formed part of the obligatory testing which has to be undergone. In life, and especially in life's essential works, there is no wasted moment. Everything contributes to the spiritual uplift which must accompany the material process. How many have destroyed themselves, or have gone without reaching the goal they had set themselves, because they possessed neither the burning faith nor the purity which allow one to face the time of testing?

Various other references to Alchemy and the Spagiric Art

However far back in time one goes, one finds that men interested in natural sciences have disguised them from the profane by calling them 'Occult Sciences'. Alchemy and astrology seem jointly to have occupied the place of honour in this respect. Do not forget that, without astro-

logy, it would be impossible to discuss alchemy and indeed impossible to use it. It could be said that in the past, astrology bore the same relationship to alchemy as mathematics does to chemistry today. One must go back to the Middle Ages to get a true idea of the importance alchemy once possessed. Princes, Popes and learned men—Bacon, Lully and Arnaud de Villeneuve amongst others—were faithful craftsmen and defenders of the traditional sciences. There is reason to believe that alchemy was both known and practised by wise men in ancient Egypt. Nevertheless, it was by the Arabs that the science was transmitted to the West. The transmission, though, took place at a time when true teaching was being replaced by a kind of decadence. It follows that those texts written at the end of the oral tradition, when transmission of the teaching no longer took account of the moral and spiritual qualities previously demanded of aspirants, contain deformations of the truth. They are written in an attitude of mind far removed from that presiding over the initial real knowledge.

This is why, in the Middle Ages, charlatans swarmed around the respectable, traditionally minded scholars. These imitators claimed to be mages, astrologers and alchemists. They played on the credulity of their fellow men, while their supposed knowledge sowed doubt and confusion in the minds of many. This state of affairs lasted until the birth of modern civilisation produced a very unflattering attitude towards astrology and alchemy, one which was not only negative but tinged with irony and scorn. The discovery of the first laws of modern physics and chemistry then completely blotted out the past and radically modified the entire spirit of research after natural laws, dissociating it entirely from a spiritual concern.

Truth, though, has obviously escaped somehow. In a civilisation which has brought him control over matter, man gives little indication of having captured happiness. He is always looking for something else; this curiosity, or perhaps will-to-power, threatens to drag him to his

destruction. Given this, it should not be surprising if, increasingly, certain unsatisfied individuals are looking afresh at the past and asking questions about their ancestors' way of life and way of thinking. Quite apart from reflex action to escape from a present which is found to be deceptive or unbearable, there is a positive aspect to the new infatuation with the so-called occult sciences. In spite of the confusion which is still rife, what we are witnessing is a rebirth of modes of knowing which antiquity held in the highest esteem. In particular, isolated researchers are brooding over the ancient alchemist's athenors, hoping thereby to recover their lost secrets.

It is obvious that nuclear chemistry, by virtue of the perspectives it opens up on transmutations, rejoins and even surpasses the conceptions of the old alchemists. But do not be mistaken: the intentions of the two are quite different, even diametrically opposed. Nuclear science liberates energy whilst destroying the atomic structure. Alchemy, on the other hand, utilises this energy to make the matter evolve, so that it and the person concerned in the operation both tend towards a greater degree of perfection. It is useless to make pronouncements about this difference. Our present interest in nuclear problems is confined to areas where they impinge on the search for a new medicine and where alchemy itself is involved in that search.

According to Raymond Lully, one of the greatest adepts of the Middle Ages, alchemy is both an art and a science. It entails a profound philosophy, a natural synthesis based on the theory of the evolution of nature. It extends into all spheres of life. The word *alchemy* is derived from the Egyptian word *Keme* meaning 'science of the Black Earth'. The reader will grasp the importance of this if he casts his mind back to the slow and progressive corruption of the First Matter, all of which must reach the stage of absolute blackness. Another breakdown of the word alchemy is as follows: '*Al-Chemy*'. 'Al' or 'El' is Arabic for before. Thus alchemy is a science which comes before

chemistry and indeed provides it with a wider frame of reference. When alchemy is concerned solely with medical research, it is often qualified by adepts as *spagiric*. This latter word can be broken down into '*spao*' meaning 'separated from' and '*ageiro*' meaning 'gathered together'. The great spagiric art does consist in separating out the life forces, the vital fluid, the energies of earthly substances both vegetable and mineral, and then in reconstituting them in man. Spagiric alchemy, founded on observation of nature and of man, has roots in the Quabalah, in astrology and in the basic rules of alchemy. This type of medicine enjoyed great attention in the past, but for traces of its meaning we must turn to Paracelesus. In his *Paramirum* lib. 1, Cap. III, he says: 'Disce ergo Alchimian quae alias Spagirie dicitur', meaning that the spagiric art and alchemy are practically synonymous. However, that which is alchemical is not necessarily spagiric, though what is spagiric is necessarily alchemical. The essential process of the spagiric art can be summarised as follows: *solve et coagula*, also expressed in slightly different form: *Fac fixum volatile et volatile fixum*. The whole process is only brought about by lengthy preparations whose secret has been lost until the present day.

F. Jollivet-Castelot, in his book *Spagiric Medicine* (page III of the preface) indicates that to extract the real properties of a body, one must act spagirically. By this he means separating the heavy from the subtle and the pure from the impure: 'To discover and extract the essence of simple substances whose first matter is composed of three things, one has firstly to decompose them, corrupt them and deprive them totally of the form with which nature has clothed them. One then separates the elements, sets them in order and reforms them into a more perfect body.'

It is easy to see that the *volatile* is the essence of life, the non-material energy, while the *fixed* is simply what remains at the end of corruption, which incineration disperses to leave only ash. The volatile is the salt of this ash

and is in its turn fixed so as to become incorporated in the human matter. If the operational process is not exactly followed, the essence, which is extremely fluid, escapes and is lost, leaving the grosser elements which, in medical terms, are toxic. Whilst Paracelsus was one of the greatest spagirists of the sixteenth century, there were also many alchemical doctors. Very soon, though, hermetic medicine vanished into oblivion. Not until the twentieth century was renewed interest shown. The ancient texts dealings with these matters have now mostly been reissued and the number of seekers is increasing all the time. One of the best works is Brother Basil Valentine's *The Twelve Keys of Philosophy*. In it, he discusses at length a subject closely connected with the spagiric art. It is to be found in the fourth key, pertaining to mortification. Here are some quotations from this book which might move the reader to long meditation:

The pure is freed from the impure . . . Corruption of the one and generation of the other . . . All flesh born of the earth shall be destroyed anew and shall be returned to the earth. In as much as previously it was earth, new generation of the salt of the earth is produced by the breadth of celestial life.

So that the subtle may be separated from the dense (a term that often recurs in alchemy) the matter must firstly be brought to the height of its corruption; in the words of some, to the chaos of undifferentiated matter. At this point the most subtle elements which have given life to the matter, i.e. the salts which have allowed it to take on bodily shape, will free themselves from the inert material substances now reduced to ash. To confirm this, Basil Valentine says.

A salt is most effectively extracted by fire if the body in question has previously been brought to putrefaction . . .

the true, natural tartar to be dissolved is hidden in the ash. When this tartar has been dissolved, the mighty lock to the King's apartment may be unfastened.

To conclude this chapter, I would like to mention how the best of the modern authors, in their turn, reveal the nature of the First Matter. What they say can then be compared with my own pronouncements and in this way the reader will form a clearer picture of the subject.

In his important alchemical text, '*Les Deumeures Philosophales*', Fulcanelli gives a very clear explanation of the nature of the Secret Fire and of the First Matter. He develops particularly the relationship of hermetic symbolism and the Sacred Art. In the chapter devoted to the Salamander of Lisieux, he tries to explain the hidden significance of the animal. My attention was aroused especially by his reference to the birth of Jesus at the beginning of the sign of Capricorn: 'Is Jesus, lying on a straw-filled crib in the cave at Bethlehem, not the new Sun, bringing the Light of the World? Is he not God himself in perishable, fleshly form? He who said: "I am the Spirit, I am the Life, I have come to instil things with fire." This spiritual fire, given body and substance, is the Salt, the hidden breath . . .' Let us now return to our analogies: Jesus was indeed born under Capricorn. At this period the earth is enriched by the remains of vegetable matter which it has had time to rot during the autumn. It retains the salts which under Scorpio have been separated from the combustible elements. These latter are then destroyed by the fire of Sagittarius. The salts are now ready to nourish the sown and germinated seed, awaiting only the spring to give life to future vegetation. A little while further on Fulcanelli adds: 'Philalethes, speaking of the Secret Fire, says that it is found in the belly of Aries or Taurus.' We know that under this fire sign, which is in full activity in early spring, things take on a new lease of life and vegetation flourishes.

The adept is keenly aware of this and fixes his attention on the life forces rising from the roots of the plant. It is these which he must capture to achieve his work. We are not concerned with a purely material process, but with something living, something which unites matter and the spirit behind it.

In a more recent book, Alexander von Bernus' '*Alchemie et Medecine*', the author provides some curious indications, though on an entirely different level, when he speaks of the *spiritus vini lulliani*, and of the ancient secret preparation concerned with the Spirit of Wine, and of the Alkaest. Von Bernus is very explicit when it comes to discussing the First Matter: 'The road is long which leads to the cave of the fire-spitting Dragon and the lair of the Red Lion.' A little later he adds: 'He who has not been chosen will find that his arrival has not advanced his progress in the least. It is truly impossible to discover it (the First Matter) without illumination which is the gift of God.

It is for this reason so many authors have stated that the First Matter is neither animal, vegetable nor mineral, even though it is made up of the three kingdoms of nature. The vital fluid, of which the interior fire or spark of life is composed, exists in all three kingdoms. All hermetic philosophers agree that the Materia Prima must be prepared in such a way as to become the Materia Secunda, so that ultimately it may be in fit state to bring about what is expected of it. Some authors look for it in mineral substances, others in tartar, others again in the earth. The truth is that it is found everywhere and may be collected in abundance. The critical factor is to separate it from the vulgar bodies in which it is retained, so that ultimately it may be fixed in itself.

SIX

THE HERMETIC TREASURES OF THE ALCHEMISTS

The Emerald Tablet *and the* Mutus Liber *provide all the essential alchemical knowledge in symbolic form.*

It is not my intention to give an alchemy lesson. That lies outside the scope of this book. But I am going to comment on the basic principles contained in the alchemist's double Bible, the books to which he constantly refers, for they contain the essentials of his symbolic knowledge and the true formula of our elixir. I am speaking of the *Emerald Tablet* which contains the knowledge in written form and of the *Mutus Liber*, the 'silent book' which provides it in pictures.

The *Emerald Tablet* whose author is given as Hermes Trismegistus, sums up the whole of alchemy in a few sentences. It is not known exactly who Hermes Trismegistus was. He may be part of history or part of myth. His name may cover a group of three different people. It has also been suggested that one man, perhaps the greatest initiate of past ages, was inhabited by three superior guides. This often occurs in beings who carry out a predetermined role. Whatever the facts, the *Emerald Tablet* offers a resumé of the way in which the philosophic work develops and in so doing reveals the formula for the resulting universal medicine. Each phrase of the *Tablet* is therefore to be read and

meditated on, for it can awaken the whole process of the Great Work in the heart of the Seeker.

Turning to the *Mutus Liber*, we find a collection not of words but of pictures. Each operation of hermetic philosophy is illustrated separately and evocatively. This collection, whose source is difficult to trace, was published by Manget (in *Bibliotheca Chemica* Volume II) then reissued in the collection *Albums Esoteriques* by Paul Derain of Lyon. Alchemists rate it as one of the most precious gems available to them. The plates clearly reveal the nature of the First Matter, the way in which alchemists gathered spring dew and indeed everything which the neophyte requires to reach his goal. In a section devoted to experimental procedures, a succession of laboratory operations leading to completion of the Work is shown. The *Mutus Liber* is without any doubt the work most highly to be recommended to all seeking initiation into alchemy.

I want to express those ideas concerning the spagiric art which the *Emerald Tablet* and the *Mutus Liber* have inspired in me.

This of course, is only one way in which the vast subject matter of these two books may be expressed. My aim is simply to throw a little light on the first stages of the labours of Hermes and also to justify the various operations I have described.

However, before embarking on a commentary, I want to resume the essence of the *Emerald Tablet* for those not familiar with it. There have been many translations. Here is one:*

The text of the 'Emerald Tablet' of Hermes

'True it is, without falsehood, certain and most true. That which is above is like to that which is below, and

* In the translation of R. Steele and Mrs. D. W. Singer, quoted by E. J. Holmyard in 'Alchemy' (Pelican).

that which is below is like to that which is above, to accomplish the miracles of one thing.
And as all things were by the contemplation of one, so all things arose from this one thing by a single act of adaption.
The father thereof is the Sun the mother the Moon.
The Wind carried it in its womb, the Earth is the nurse thereof.
It is the father of all works of wonder throughout the whole world.
The power thereof is perfect.
It is to be cast on to Earth, it will separate the element of Earth from that of Fire, the Subtle from the gross.
With great sagacity it does ascend gently from Earth to Heaven.
Again it does descend to Earth and untieth in itself the force from things superior and things inferior.
Thus thou wilt possess the glory of the brightness of the whole world, and all obscurity will fly far from thee.
This thing is the strong fortitude of all strength, for it overcometh every subtle thing and doth penetrate every solid substance.
Thus was this world created.
Hence will there be marvellous adaptations achieved, of which the manner is this.
For this reason, I am called Hermes Trismegistus, because I hold three parts of the wisdom of the whole world.
That which I had to say about the operation of Sol is completed.'*

No adept has ever contested the worth of this text, nor of the plates in the *Mutus Liber*. To understand alchemy,

* In his French translation in *Anthologie de la poésie hermetique* Claude d' Yge makes the following points: 'We are told that the Tablet is green, the colour of spring dew, which is therefore called the Emerald of the Philosophers.' And 'The book is written as if the Emerald of the Philosophers, not Hermes, is speaking.'

superior power, the originator of the orders which the angels pass on, is a truly integrated whole. It is this being which grants the privileges of unity to individuals or to a united couple who are specially chosen. One should add that, even in days when alchemists joined together in secret societies, their aid to one another in no way implied the revelation of secrets. Rather it meant that each helped his fellow to climb the rungs of the evolutionary ladder, so that each might personally be called and receive the supreme command and spark of life which he required to carry out his task.

What, though *is* the teaching conveyed by the angel with the trumpet? To find the answer, we should examine the second plate of the *Mutus Liber* (see Fig. 5).

The two angels seen in the first plate can be found in the upper half of the second. Here they are presenting the Philosophic Work conceived of in spiritual terms. On the material level, the Work is represented by a glass container into which the First Matter will be put. It will then be heated in another, the alchemist's furnace, examples of which may still be found in old laboratories. Still on the material level, we see that the two angels are replaced by the couple, the seeker and his wife, who are kneeling in prayer. All their attention is fixed on the initial labours they will have to undertake. The visible correspondences between the two angels and the couple and also between the Work and the furnace illustrate the following fragment of the *Emerald Tablet*: 'That which is above is like to that which is below, and that which is below is like to that which is above, to accomplish the miracles of one thing.' They also illustrate this sentence 'All things were by the contemplation of one.' The philosophic Egg presented by the angels shows us that the superior being who is father of the one thing is also the father of the universal Thelema. He is seen at the centre of the Egg, with two figures at his side, surmounted respectively by the sun and moon. '*The father thereof is the sun*'—The sun is seen to shine with all

its power at the top of the spiritual part of this second plate. '*The mother the moon*'—The moon can be seen in the top right-hand corner of the first plate. This essential duality, found throughout alchemy, is also symbolised by the sun and the moon which crown the two small figures contained in the philosophic Egg. The above teaching is essential knowledge for the would-be adept. He must try to transpose it to higher levels. All this is hidden from the two terrestrial observers who are seen kneeling at either side of the athenor containing the Egg. This latter is destined to undergo a multitude of processes. The aim is that the matter contained in it—the Fix—should become volatile and the volatile—i.e. the polarities visible only in the upper part—should become fixed in its turn. All this is necessary for the ultimate transformation.

The gesture of the woman and the attitude of the man seem to indicate the mimicking of something found in the *Emerald Tablet*. There one reads: 'It does ascend gently from Earth to Heaven. Again it does descend to Earth, and untieth in itself the force from things superior and things inferior.' All the secret teaching of the alchemists is freely given by guides, visible or invisible. They help the seeker during the series of operations he carries out, in order effectively to accomplish 'the separation of the element of Earth from that of Fire, the Subtle from the Gross'. This is the point at which the subtle spagiric preparations, which we have discussed at such great length, play a part.

The third plate of the *Mutus Liber* (see Fig. 7) completes the traditional teaching, whose object was to give the would-be adept knowledge of all elements, all forces and all secrets of nature which he required to complete the Work and to affirm his power. The same teaching is conveyed in the *Emerald Tablet*: 'Thus thou wilt possess the glory of the brightness of the whole world, and all obscurity will fly far from thee. This thing is the strong fortitude of all strength, for it overcometh every subtle thing and doth penetrate every solid substance.'

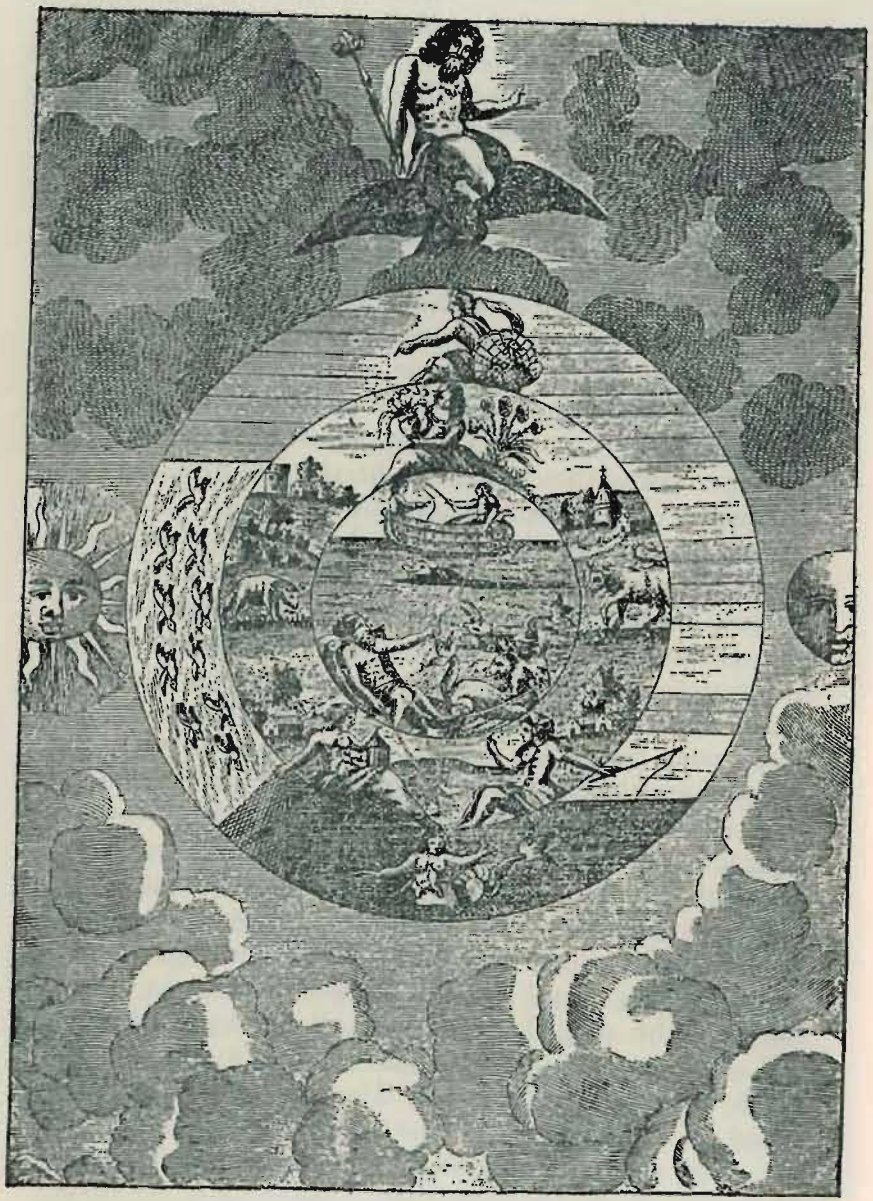


Fig. 7
Mutus Liber, Plate III

Thus will the power of the adept radiate over the world. This is symbolised by the Father enthroned at the top of the third plate, holding in his hand the sceptre of power and knowledge. At his service he has the two necessary opposites, here represented by the sun and the moon. These, as can be seen, are situated either side of a series of concentric circles. The circles themselves contain a representation of the whole of nature, of the First Matter needed for the Work, of radiation from above and of the two signs of the zodiac—Aries and Taurus—which signify the time of year when alchemy students collect the dew.

One thing which should be learned from this highly important, symbolic information is that the student must first undergo a long period of self-preparation. It is no good thinking that a rapid glance at some alchemical text prepares one for action and the search for the First Matter. This latter contains at the outset none of the invisible particles which must sooner or later become fixed in it if the required metamorphosis is to take place. Indeed, one of the aims of the present work is to warn the reader against such an attitude. The majority of authors concerned with alchemy have totally ignored the first three plates of the *Mutus Liber*, jumping straight to the fourth. In this, one sees the seeker and his female companion squeezing out canvasses which have previously been laid in a meadow of green grass, so as gradually to become saturated with dew. This, as we know, rises continually up the blades of grass during the exaltation of springtime. The symbols of spring, Aries and Taurus, appear again in this fourth plate. The irradiation of life energies is represented by the rays which radiate from the top of the picture. These contain the solar and lunar polarities, themselves designated in the upper corners.

The large number of canvasses stretched over the grass shows how important the operation is, and the large amount of dew which is required.

It goes without saying that the subsequent plates of the

Mutus Liber are also extremely important. The seeker should meditate on them at length. They deal in detail with the material aspects of the task I have already considered. Reflection on these details can be found in many texts, each author giving his own interpretation, often embellished with highly complex formulae. The most important thing of all, I repeat, is to grasp the need for serious preparation, which may take months or even years. You will never observe the slightest evolution in your preparations if you yourself do not evolve.

In past times, fraternities of alchemists contained many seekers, of whom the majority gave up at the first hurdles or else gave way to stupidity and madness. The young and fervent, imbued with the sacred flame, conformed patiently to a hard routine of observation, spending entire days and nights watching the fire. Whether the flame of the oil lamp or an actual charcoal fire, this demanded constant attention and was the task with which the neophyte was entrusted. In between these duties, teaching from the Masters was freely given, according to the pupil's progress and evolution. Only very much later and only if things worked out that way, was he called on to achieve the Great Work.

Nowadays, electricity and thermostats considerably simplify the material part of the task. It is thus possible to devote oneself at far greater length to the essentials.

Our preparations for the first degree are thus relatively simple and free from problems of laboratory technique.

What is required is to capture the life forces and to use them in the best possible way to bring about the philosophic elevation of the preparations during successive coctions. In addition, they are used to regenerate the elements, even to increase their volume, so that production may meet demand, for a large quantity of matter is needed for the production of a little liquid.

SEVEN

EXPERIMENTAL AND CLINICAL VERIFICATION

All the evidence points to the conclusion that the liquor of gold—which according to all normal systems of physical and chemical analysis contains no gold—constitutes a new state of matter.

It must be admitted that none of the considerations set out in the foregoing chapters is of a nature to convince the great majority of doctors and chemists. For this reason it is necessary to add an account of the tests to which I submitted the liquor once I found I could produce it regularly.

Laboratory tests immediately showed the complete absence of anything toxic or radioactive. Even more surprising for me, at least to start with, was the negative result of spectrum analysis with regard to the presence of gold. The solvent powder (with which the powdered gold was mixed), revealed a certain number of elements, notably sodium, silicon, iron, aluminium, copper, magnesium and boron. In the liquor alone, sodium, silicon, boron and also potassium were found. On the other hand, normal methods reveal no trace of gold in the so-called liquor of vegetable gold. It must, however, be admitted that *something* of the metallic gold is transferred to the liquor. When

these analyses were being carried out I had about 7 kilogrammes of solvent powder available. This included 700 grammes of powdered gold which had been added gradually. Each time I add gold, I obtain a liquor of definite colour. I have produced between 65 and 70 litres of liquor in all. If on the other hand I continue coctions without adding any gold, I must posit an eventual state of *exhaustion* for the mixture. When coction is repeated several times, the resulting liquors lack any gold colour. This exhaustion does not stem from the first matter but from the gold. If I add powdered gold to an 'exhausted' mixture, the colour returns. How can this be explained, except by admitting that the gold has a 'soul' which defies ordinary analysis? As for the 'body' of the gold, this is lost in the solvent powders and serves no useful purpose.

These results led me to a further experiment. Taking some liquor no. 1, I put it into coction with an additional quantity of gold, thus obtaining colour no. 2. However, when the mixture was left to stand and cool I noticed that a kind of white cotton wool-like substance was forming at the heart of the new liquor. This gradually decanted to form a sort of cream which, when dried, became a white powder. Does this correspond to the material part of the gold, to its body? I am truly obliged to believe that it does.

The most important task, though, was to check the preparation's therapeutic properties. Since I am neither doctor nor chemist, I was confronted with a difficult problem. I knew no doctor qualified to undertake sufficiently prolonged and systematic tests. Then I had the idea of putting myself in the hands of researchers of the anthroposophic movement. I reckoned that I would be likely to find men willing and able to understand my approach. Rudolf Steiner, later master of the movement, had often made reference to a medicine based on gold.

Just at that moment I made a chance encounter (though what we call chance is really only the appearance which destiny's well-regulated path adopts in our ignorant eyes).

I encountered, at any rate, a chemical engineer well known to unorthodox research. His name is H. Spindler and he enabled me to make all the necessary contacts with German firms which have links with the anthroposophical movement . . . The result of this was that my first preparations found their way to West Germany in January 1961. I myself moved near Colmar.

The early tests of the Wala-Heilmittel

It was on January 11th, 1961 that I sent the first batch of liquors to Dr. Rudolf Hauschka, Director of the Wala-Heilmittel Laboratory at Eckwalden near Göppigen, This batch consisted of liquors of the First Order numbered 1 to 7. He immediately entrusted them to his ablest doctors. On March 10th, 1961 he confirmed the positive results of the initial tests and asked me to send further preparations so that he could pass them on to the doctors in an attempt to arrive at a definitive assessment. A second series of preparations was accordingly sent on March 21st, 1961 and a third at the end of May. This contained liquor number 10. Following the continuing series of positive results obtained by the Wala doctors, I had my first meeting with them at their headquarters. We discussed the tactics to be adopted when developing the new medicine. In reply to a question from me, Dr. Hauschka said that the most spectacular result so far achieved with my medicine concerned a woman doctor from Stuttgart whom he had been called to see. He had found her on her death bed, suffering from a heart complaint. Having just received new samples from me, he gave her part of one which she used immediately. She has since recovered and drives herself around in her own car to see her patients. I have seen Dr. Hauschka many times since then and at one stage moved to Munster when there was talk of building a new laboratory there to prepare certain Wala specialities and

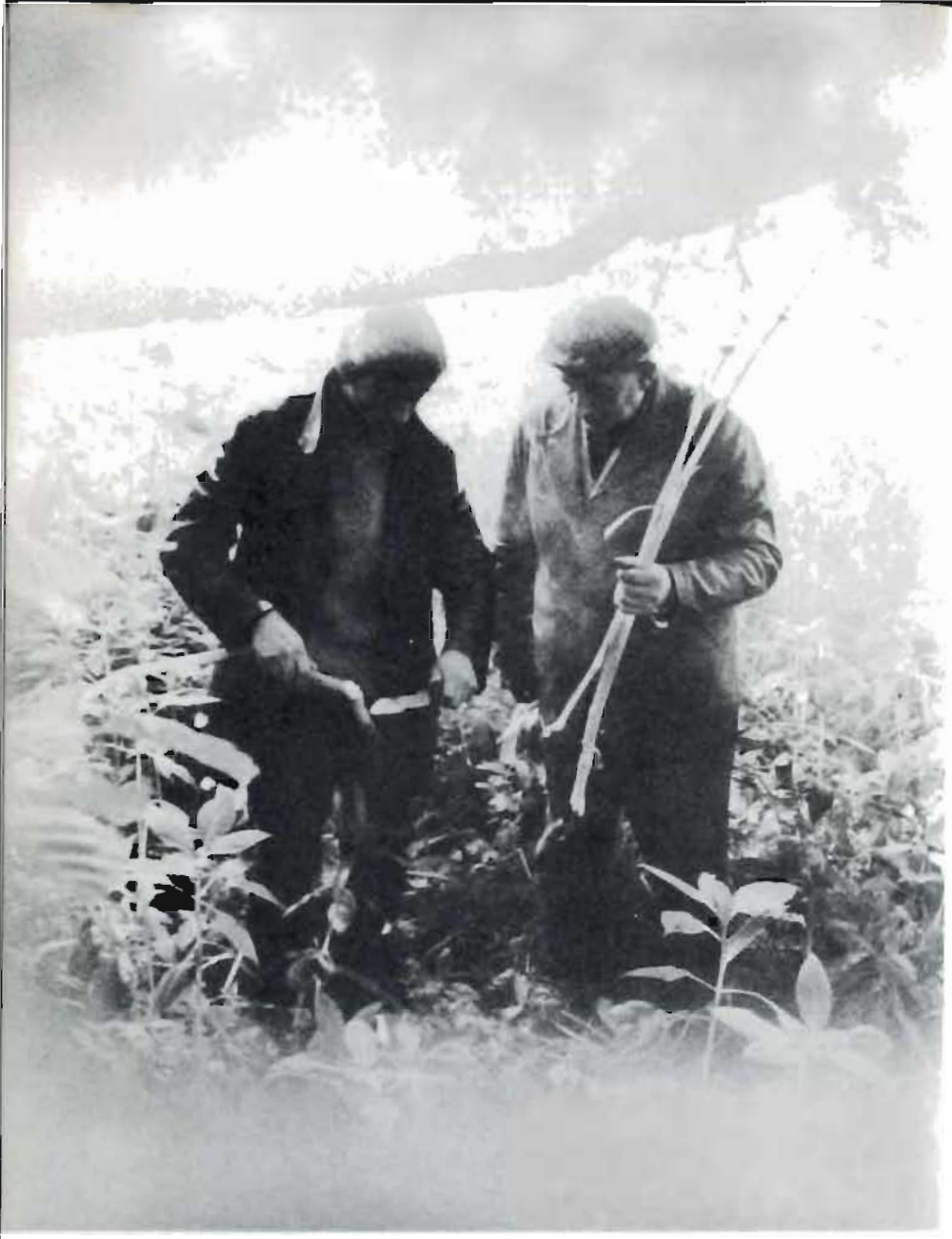
to produce my preparation. For reasons quite unconnected with medicine, the project has not come to fruition. At the same time there was also a possibility of my going to the country laboratories at Eckwalden to produce my liquor there. But nothing has come of that and my dealings with Dr. Hauschka have not advanced any further. I am, however, still on excellent terms with him and consider his moral integrity without blemish. In an exchange of letters at the beginning of 1963 he was still writing in the following terms:

> I want first to thank you personally for your attitude to those concerned with your gold preparation. We, as part of that concern, are glad that you yourself are having the patience which such an undertaking demands. We are free and willing to work with you and are the first to recognise that you are the complete master of your solvent powder.

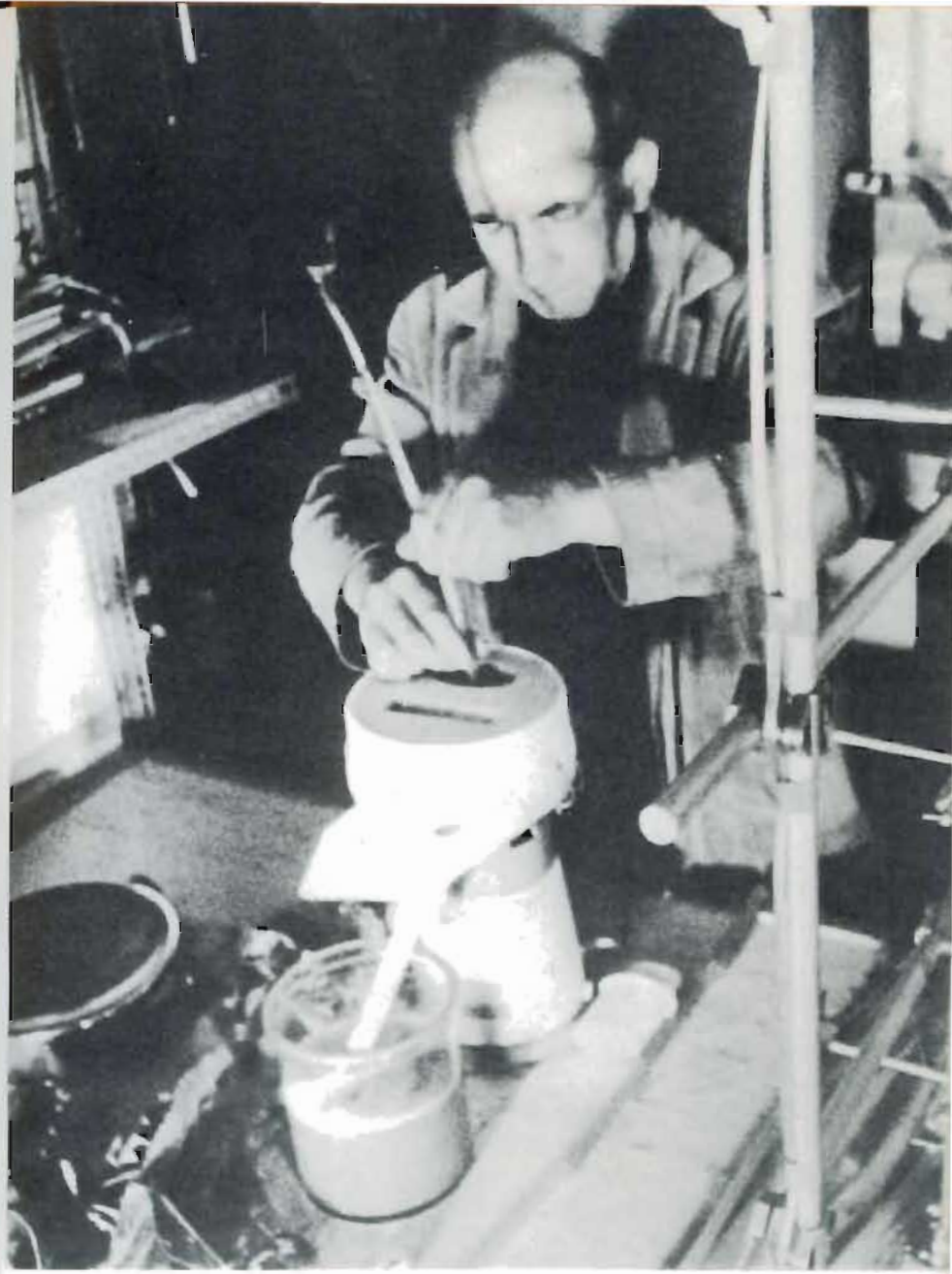
Experiments carried out by Weleda A.G. of Stuttgart

Mr. H. Spindler, a friend of Dr. Hauschka's, seeing that I had little inclination to go to Eckwalden, introduced me to a second laboratory. This, too, was imbued with anthroposophical ideas. It was the Weleda A.G. of Stuttgart, which had a French branch at St. Louis, near the Swiss frontier. I was introduced to this concern for the first time in 1962 and received another warm welcome. Naturally the tests had to be started all over again. Once more, we did not have to wait long for positive results. My previous experiences had led me to be more frank, so as to gain the confidence of my highly competent and painstaking researchers more quickly. At this time I decided to take out a patent to guarantee the future of my process. The nature of my relations with Weleda are illustrated by a letter

In search of the second order.

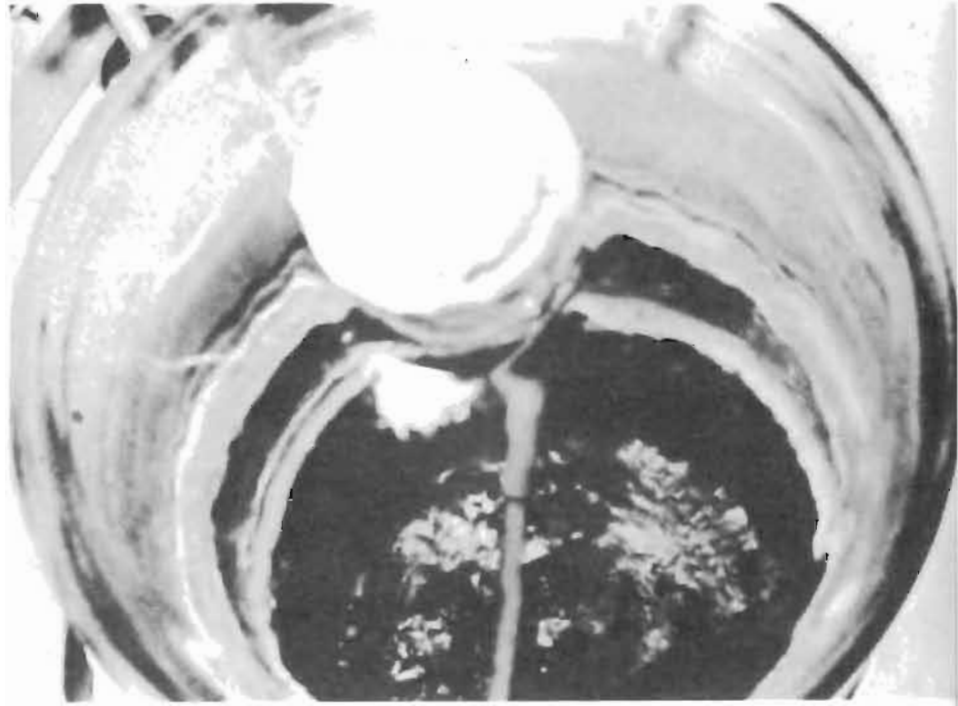


Gathering the plants *(above and preceding page)*. To reach the Second Order one no longer uses the plants, but their sap. One has to take plants with thick stems, so that a sufficient quantity of sap may be extracted.

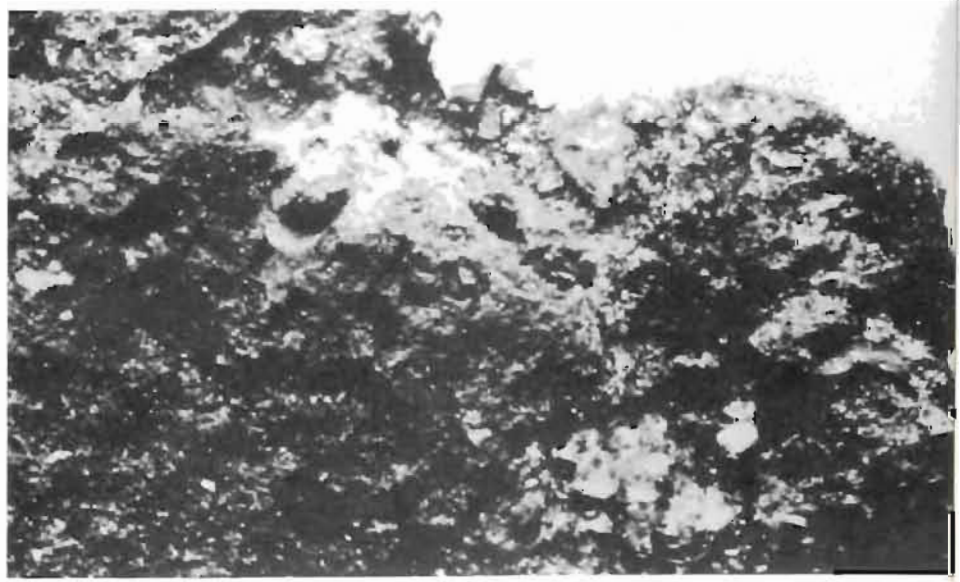


Retrieving the sap. The sap is obtained by putting the plants through a centrifugal extractor.

The Blood of the Green Lion. Adding sap with the intention of enriching the matter. This sap has previously been decanted, so that only its energetic value, called by alchemists 'The Blood of the Green Lion', is used. The Blood of the Green Lion will enrich the matter.



The enriched matter, seen in the apparatus.



The same matter, now hardened. This is called alchemists' 'Marcassite'. When it has reached perfection, Marcassite liberates the Philosopher's Mercury.

The distilled sap is kept in glass jars. The sap becomes 'Virginal Milk' which Armand Barbault used in continuing to enrich the first matter when, because of the season, sap could not be collected.

The 'Virginal Milk'. One is instructed of the birth of the Philosopher's Mercury by the presence in glass jars containing 'Virginal Milk' of germs of life and also by the appearance of different colours. At the time this picture was taken Armand Barbault had obtained only three colours: orange, yellow and white. The aim is to obtain the seven colours of the rainbow, called the Seven Colours of the Work.

which my wife and I received in July 1962 from Mr. Walter Cloos, head of research there.

Stuttgart, July 12th, 1962

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Barbault,

I want very sincerely to thank both of you for the confidence you have shown in entrusting me with the manuscript *'Preparation of the Philosopher's Peat'*. Knowing that you have both worked to bring this important task to fruition, that the knowledge and experience are shared, I am addressing my personal thanks to both of you. You may rest assured that I realise the importance of the secret you have shared with me and the need to maintain that secrecy. I have for many years been studying the question of Humus in liaison with Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophical movement. Much of what I have been searching for over the last fourteen years now finds an answer and my thoughts are turned in new directions. I hope that we shall be able to work profitably together in the future. With my best wishes, Yours, W. Cloos.

The reports which the Weleda doctors submitted were not passed on to me. I simply remember the names of two of the doctors: Frobenius and Treichler. Dr. Frobenius of Wiesneck took several drops of my liquor each morning and registered all the usual phenomena mentioned by previous researchers: marked reduction in tiredness, increase in initiative, improved urination etc. Dr. Treichler favoured injections consisting of approximately one drop of vegetabilised gold diluted in a saline solution. He obtained similar results. Nevertheless, as I say, the exact posologies were not revealed to me. Here is the text of a letter which I received from Weleda at this time.

Dear Mr. Barbault,

We would like to bring to your notice that the initial

tests undertaken by our medical department with your products have yielded very positive results. We would therefore welcome any possibility of your producing your elements in slightly larger quantities in the future. We hope that you will find the surroundings you need and sufficient space well away from centres of population, so that you may be in close communion with nature for your delicate task. We consider that these conditions are necessary, given the high quality of your products. We do not think that this standard could be achieved elsewhere.

Here in Germany there is an interested group of 800 to 1,000 doctors to whom we can, in time, make your products known.

We wish you complete success in your efforts and remain, with friendly greetings,

Weleda S. A. Stuttgart

But in spite of this, the cost of raw materials needed to widen the scope of the enterprise, particularly powdered gold, meant that no agreement was reached to realise these hopes born of long experiment.

After this I decided to restrict myself to dealings with individual doctors who showed interest in my research. I was further encouraged to take this step by a growing realisation that my liquor of gold was not a specific remedy but a universal additive, able to stimulate the effects of ordinary medicine to a remarkable degree by acting on the entire vital field. My medicine does not, therefore, seek to operate on the same wave-length as official medicine.

I would add that another reason why I stopped working with commercial laboratories was the unwillingness of the latter to reveal the outcome of their experiments to me. In addition, they tended to keep me in ignorance of the dosages they used.

Here are some examples of treatment undertaken by individual doctors.

Our Preparation saves two people critically ill with Uraemia

Dr. M. W . . . of Colmar managed to save two patients critically ill with Uraemia by adding drops of preparations nos. 5 and 6 to the medicines which he had previously administered without effect. Radical change was observed after a few hours and the two patients, both of whom had been considered hopeless cases, easily survived their crises. As Dr. M. W . . . pointed out when he reported on the case in the presence of Drs. Itchner and Cloos of Weleda, the drops were not given as a wonder drug supplanting all other medicines, but as a supplement and catalyst to certain specific remedies. Dr. M. W . . . followed this with a resumé of his general theories on the subject, making in particular the point that the preparation seemed to him an effective remedy for those suffering from kidney blockages. He referred specifically to printing workers made ill by excesses of lead and to pilots who flew through the sound barrier. All this took place in 1962, when Weleda was beginning its own experiments.

A woman paralysed by Multiple Sclerosis is cured in a year

On the advice of her medical friends at Weleda and at Wala, Dr. Ruth Jensen-Hillringhaus of Fribourg-en-Brisgau asked to be allowed to carry out further tests. At the time she ran a magnificent clinic and herself gave treatment by injections supplemented by the specific remedy required by each illness. She did not hesitate to tell us the posologies and the manner in which she treated her patients. This collaboration lasted from 1962 to 1964. At the end of a year she presented to us a patient completely cured of multiple sclerosis and who had come to

Munster especially to thank us. In her own observation of the dosages required, she came to the conclusion that thin people react more favourably than fat people. The effect is more rapid. Our collaboration with her came to an end when she decided that she wanted to set up a laboratory to produce the substances at her clinic. It was difficult for me to part with my Peat to anyone unprepared for the task of regenerating it. Solvent powders can be regenerated for as long as is necessary but if they are not manipulated in a particular way they soon run the risk of being destroyed. At that time I was not prepared to yield all my manufacturing secrets.

From the beginning of 1963 other doctors became interested in my preparation. This gave me the chance to understand more exactly how to go about things and the precise dosages to administer. I also received confirmation that the preparation alone is not always sufficient and must sometimes be combined with other medicines which the doctor will prescribe. I learned that the best moment to take the drops is at sunrise, though certain people with heart disease may take them both morning and night and others again four times a day.

The Homeopathic opinion: complementary associations

One of my friends, E.Z., who is a competent homeopath and also versed in acupuncture, came to spend a few days at Colmar. For some time he had thought that my preparation could find its best application in homeopathy.

I had already been asked for specimens by homeopathic doctors but there had never been any follow-up. I had begun to wonder why. My friend Z., after having prepared many separate dilutions and experimented with them in drops and injections, ascertained that the dilutions produced absolutely no results. The answer is that the preparation of my liquors is analogous to homeopathic preparation,

due to the rhythmic movement which causes the product to attain its etheric level. So, in diluting my liquor too much, my friend had in fact been denaturing it. If this point is understood, the association of the product with homeopathic remedies is ideal. These latter slightly enfeeble the cell, which must then make an effort if they are to achieve their effect. Our preparation is the perfect nourishment for the cell, which thus maintains its equilibrium.

A spectacular attempt to cure a case of Syphilis

This attempt took place under the aegis of a provincial doctor whose attitude tended towards scepticism. The patient had been afflicted to the highest degree for a number of years. The reactions to the Nelson test and the other Wasserman tests were entirely positive. The patient suffered from troubles of the aorta which seemed incurable. All treatment had been discontinued and the patient prepared for any eventuality. After several weeks of treatment with the entire range of preparations (1 to 10), the renewed Wasserman tests proved negative and the painful awakenings previously experienced had disappeared. These tests should be repeated, for according to the tradition, Potable Gold has the reputation of curing this kind of illness in particular.

Are we dealing with Nuclear Medicine?

All the evidence leads us to believe that the action of the vegetabilised gold takes place at the level of the etheric forces, that is to say at a higher level than that reached by normal medicine. Certain observations allow one to add that its action is found chiefly at the level of the nucleus of the living cell. This would offer an explanation for:

a. The rapid regeneration of cells—clinically observed; the nucleus has an essential organising role in the cellular metabolism.
b. The need to combine the liquor with normal medicines and also the need for correct food. These provide the necessary material support for the reorganisation of the protoplasm.
c. The anti-viral properties of the preparation. Viruses attack the normal metabolism of the nucleus precisely at the level of the acids which play such an important part in maintaining the equilibrium of the cell and so of the entire organism.

Perhaps further tests will enable one to establish what preventative and curative properties the medicine possesses in relation to the imbalances which radioactivity and atomic radiation cause. These disturbances also take place at the level of the DNA chains of the nuclei. This would constitute a vast and uniquely important area for this medicine to work in, quite apart from the areas in which it is already accepted as effective by those who use it. These consist of illnesses of vascular origin, troubles of the liver and kidneys, arteriosclerosis, impure blood and hardening of the veins and arteries.

By analogy, the customary way of proceeding in traditional or Paracelsian medicine, one can postulate the effect which various liquors more refined than no. 1 will have. As I have already indicated, liquor of the second order is obtained by boiling liquor of the first order in coction with new gold. One continues in this way to reach liquor no. 7 and then no. 10. In theory, the first three liquors act principally on the heart, the blood vessels and the humours; liquors 4 and 5 act on the spinal cord and on states of mind; liquors 6 and 7 act on the brain, the head and the spirit; finally, liquor no. 10 is 'balancing'.

Such preparations, however, are lengthy and expensive. The few experiments we have carried out have, it is true,

yielded encouraging results. They need, though, to be repeated more systematically, especially those concerned with diseases of the spinal cord and with nervous diseases in general.

Further qualitative analysis using Professor Theodor Schwenk's method

Professor Theodor Schwenk is another member of the anthroposophical movement. He has recently published a fascinating study called *Forms produced by water in motion** which deals with a method of discovering the quality of water. The main idea involved in this process had previously been expounded by the same author in a work called *Visible Chaos*. The internal surfaces which are formed in moving water are, in effect, sensory organs, the points at which the water receives etheric and cosmic forces.

Having once accepted this theory, it will become clear that polluted water, whose pollution makes it unable to form the necessary internal surfaces, will be unable to receive these forces. It will have become dead water.

At this point Professor Schwenk devised a method of photographing these internal surfaces. To achieve this, he put a drop of the water he wished to study into a 'control' of pure water to which had been added a small amount of glycerine. A system of mirrors adapted to the purpose allows him to photograph the forms produced by the falling droplet at various stages of development. The experiment shows that the richness and beauty of these forms are in direct relation to the quality of water of which the drop is composed. Generally speaking, polluted water—and also the sterile water which is normally supplied for

* Theodor Schwenk: *Bewegungsformen des Wassers* (Verlag Freies Geistleben, Stuttgart).

urban domestic consumption—produces only poor, half-formed images, whereas water which is biologically whole produces a harmonious pattern of multi-petalled flowers. I submitted the elixir to this test. I took two photographs and then a third with which to compare them. Preparation A produced a considerably less rich image than preparation B. This is explained by the fact that in the first case the final coction had been carried out without the addition of new gold, whereas in the second, new gold had been added.

This method is extremely sensitive and, as it stands, can be used to check the intensity of cosmic forces in the elixir. In addition, though, Professor Schenk asserts that the intensity varies according to the aspect of the heavens and particularly during eclipse. This is yet more justification for the need to carry out the work with full awareness of and respect for the rhythms of nature. As I have already said, the energies in my preparation with which we are concerned are at their height at dawn.

One might usefully refer to Professor Schwenk's book and there see the difference in the richness and beauty of the images between living and dead water.

It goes without saying that many other tests and experiments could be invented. What is wanted above all is for a team of doctors, with no preconceived ideas, to carry out a whole series of experiments with liquors of the different levels, as has already been done with preparation no. 1.

EIGHT

OTHER METALLIC TINCTURES OF THE FIRST DEGREE

In addition to vegetabilised gold, the alchemist can, within the framework of first-degree medicine, prepare tinctures of such metals as silver, antimony, copper and tin.

It is traditional teaching that first-degree tinctures can be made of metals other than gold. Each one of these metals, or their tinctures, corresponds to a planet in the solar system and equally to an organ of the human body. In this way, each of the tinctures can act as a specific remedy for the appropriate organ.

The three basic Tinctures are those of Gold, Silver and Antimony

There is correspondence between the sun and gold. The sun governs life, radiating heat and energy; it acts directly on the brain, the heart, the quality of the blood and the cells in general. Tinctures of gold are therefore beneficial to these organs. They can be extremely precious in combating old age, in revitalising cells and in maintaining the equilibrium of the metabolism.

There is correspondence between the moon and silver.

The moon governs one's vitality, ensures correct functioning of bodily organs and humours, regulates the circulation and holds particular sway over the stomach, digestion and the correct operation of the kidneys. Silver tinctures are therefore to be recommended for illnesses resulting from unsatisfactory distribution of vital forces and generally from poor circulation. Such tinctures also have a positive effect on the cerebellum and in illnesses specific to women at puberty and at the menopause.

There is correspondence between the earth and antimony. The earth is connected with the individual's physical make-up and with imperfections in it resulting from a lack of equilibrium among the elements which a man absorbs. Tincture of antimony has an equilibrating effect which allows the organism to eliminate its impurities and so recover the physical form which corresponds to its temperament. Its action is manifold but takes place at a low level. It may be found useful in combating excesses of material living.

There are also other metallic tinctures, each connected to certain stars and certain organs. Mercury corresponds to Mercury and to the nervous system, copper to Venus and to the glandular system, iron to Mars and to the gall-bladder, tin to Jupiter and the liver, lead to Saturn, the spleen and the skeleton.

All these correspondences are noted by Paracelsus and many other ancient authors. Controlled experiments should be carried out with all these tinctures, so that profit may be drawn from positive results.

Special difficulties attending the preparation of Tinctures of Metals other than Gold

The general principles involved in preparing the various other metallic tinctures remain the same as for tincture of gold. Nevertheless, one should be aware that it is much

more difficult to open the other metals—in particular antimony. The quantities of metal required are much greater. One must allow about 15 per cent by weight of the first matter in metal. In the case of gold, only 10 per cent need be allowed.

I think it would be useful to enter into some detail in order to give an idea of the more complex methods used to overcome the specific difficulties of these other metals.

If you wanted to work on 300 grammes of pure regenerated ash, you would take 45 grammes of powdered metal. This you would add to a good half litre of liquor which is pure and contains all its salts and put the whole for several hours in a water-bath in a firmly sealed vessel, so that precipitation might take place. You would then separate the liquor from the metal and add the former to the 300 grammes of ash. You would feed the mixture with plants, sap and dew to bring about a further corruption, putting aside the precipitate for future use.

Then, when you had again produced perfectly black peat and had alternately dried and moistened it several times over, so that combustible matter might be 'burnt' before incineration, you would add the precipitate which you had kept. You should continue mixing the two together until you are satisfied that the necessary interior work has taken place. One should never jibe at beginning the same experiment over and over again when concerned with the spagiric art, for the elements are seldom opened as easily as one might wish. Success is achieved through patience, attention to detail and faith in what one is doing. Finally, when you considered that you yourself were ready, you would incinerate your peat and so arrive at the new ash, ready sensitised with the nature of the chosen metal.

The next stage would, as usual, be to carry out coctions. So that the process of 'opening the metal' might continue during the successive operations, you should not forget to add some new powdered metal to each coction. You should

add a smaller quantity of powder to these successive coctions so that the new metal might open at the right time. You should be aware that it is quite possible for the phenomena to take place behind schedule, if the various operations have not been correctly carried out. Trial and error is the only method. You should be particularly aware how the dimensions of the tubes and the quality of the glass used, as well as the temperatures achieved in the oven used for coction, all affect the matter.

Generally speaking, the new tinctures will be slightly different in colour from the tincture of gold and will be tinged with the shades attributed to their corresponding planets. It is known that yellow corresponds to gold, white to silver, blue to Venus, red to Mars and violet to Jupiter. You cannot really say that the liquors reflect the colour of their corresponding planet, for if one looks at Mars, Venus or Jupiter with the naked eye one can make no distinctions of colour. However, a more detailed examination does indeed show us that Venus is tinged with blue and Mars with red. The tinctures of tin which I have most recently produced reveal a very slight touch of violet.

In practice, one should have a quantity of ashes specially impregnated with the same metal *over a period of years* to get a proper idea of what happens. I am not in that position, for I only have a very small quantity of finely prepared ash and even this is not 'pure' since it contains some gold and has reflected a gold colour for many years.

The new ash which reached its first perfection in 1960 was 'adulterated' in this way by the metallic gold which later enabled me to produce the Medicine of the First Order. Over the years I continued to use this same powder, multiplying both its quality and its quantity, always adding new gold at each successive coction.

In fact, as a result of long discussions with the laboratory scientists who followed my work, I now realise that I added much more gold than was necessary. Latterly, I

have gradually stopped adding gold and have continued to extract tinctures possessed of a beautiful gold colour.

Most recently, at a given moment, the gold colour no longer appeared. I reckoned that the gold had stopped yielding its colour and therefore its 'soul' and its 'medicine' and that my powders had achieved a certain 'purity'.

I took advantage of this to separate my powders and sort out the pure liquors, from which I was able to extract the salts. Certain of these powders were subsequently purified again, others had silver, tin or antimony added to them. Thus by trial and error I arrive at the stage which I have explained to you in this chapter.

In point of fact, as I indicated at the end of chapter 4, even those powders which I thought to be 'worn out' as far as the presence of gold was concerned, proved not to be. When I carried out a further corruption, incineration and coction, the gold colour reappeared in the liquors. As a result of this I had to carry things a stage further, adding powdered silver. In doing so, I ran great risks that my powders would calcinate or even that the tubes would explode. At length, however, whilst remaining within reasonable limits, the silver in its turn opened and the beautiful silver colour appeared. This work took two years. The gold, truly exhausted this time, finally disappeared. In fact its action cannot in any way alter the quality of the liquors obtained from the other metals. The story of the tinctures of tin and copper is similar.

How do these special difficulties attached to metals other than gold, arise? Gold is a noble metal and when its quintessence is separated from the material envelope, its liquor becomes perfect almost straightway. I maintain this in spite of the fact that many authors say that the liquor must be left to mature before it is used. With a good filter, covered in a certain thickness of ash, one soon obtains a clear liquor which is stable right from the start.

The same does not apply to the lower metals—apart from silver which also clarifies fairly quickly. Many

precautions must be taken. To speak for a moment in the language of the alchemists, in fact all metals are constituted of the same single substance and only differ one from the other in the degree to which they have reached a perfect state of that matter. Gold has reached that perfection. Other metals may usefully be compared to fruit which becomes detached from its tree before the sun has ripened it and so is unfit for consumption. Fruit such as this retains too much acidity. Similar difficulties apply if one wishes to *open* an impure metal and remove the quintessence. Hence the need to produce a precipitate which will facilitate opening. Even when an impure metal has been opened, it may still retain impurities which may reappear later and which must then be got rid of before the preparation can be used. The following method includes all the precautions which it is advisable to take: once the metal has separated from the precipitate, it is put into a toughened, fairly long tube, along with some new, pure liquor which is rich in salt. The whole is then submitted to extensive coction and superheated to produce a form of metallic lime. This is put in its turn into some peat which is undergoing regeneration. Now the metal, being more fully opened than before, will rid itself of its impurities as the corruption takes place. The incineration will complete the reduction and elimination of these impurities. Once the coction is finished, the liquor is carefully filtered and inspected for some time to see that it does not become bubbly or flocculent, for this would again mean that it was unfit to be used.

Only in my third year of experiment with these tinctures of other metals was I able to produce satisfactory liquors of silver. Antimony proved to be even more difficult and indeed nearly led to disaster when an explosion almost caused the loss of my sight. This particular danger notwithstanding, antimony is one of the most important tinctures to perfect, since its applications are general and varied. They even include the treatment of foot-and-

mouth disease in cattle. This disease, which wreaks considerable havoc, is of course an earth disease.

Perfecting the Liquors and the many therapeutic uses to which they may then be put

If there are fears that these liquors will be more difficult to use, they may be completely 'metalised', without changing the proportions of metal which I indicated above, by being left to soak in the preparation of plants and flowers which are, of course, chosen for their corespondences. The mixture is then exposed to the sun, though in a closed vessel, for about forty days and again submitted to coction and filtration. The tinctures are endowed with new qualities by the plants, thus increasing their therapeutic range. It is further known that the quality of the etheric force varies according to whether uprooted plants or simply flowers are used. The three levels mentioned by ancient authors are the ether of life, the ether of heat and the ether of light. These may well correspond to the different states of an illness found under the same planetary configuration. A red colour, which is seen in the flowers, confirms this change of state.

In the spagiric art one must coagulate, then separate and so on for as long as is necessary to allow the matter which is more fluid and so more capable of being etherised, to separate from the baser matter. This is why it is recommended that the operation of boiling, then allowing to cool, be carried out 40 times. The waters used in these boilings will previously have been treated with plants having correspondence with the illness one wants to treat. The many applications are totally risk-free, for the liquors finally obtained are in no way toxic. The method of application may be varied to suit requirements—drops, injections, creams and lotions can all be used. The responsibility, however, rests with the doctor who is carrying out

the experimental treatment. I would add that the doctors of old also consulted the sick person's horoscope. Then, according to the configurations of his birth chart and of his chart at the time when the illness began, they sought the planet in correspondence with the illness. They were then able to select with greater certainty the correct tincture.

Can you imagine a present-day collaboration between the doctor and the astrologer? Can you see temperature graph and horoscope hanging side by side at the foot of a patient's hospital bed? To some this would appear a revolutionary, to others a retrograde step. In fact, such a step would make great sense. The doctor would obtain from the astrologer all useful information on the planet which was 'in charge' at the various levels of the illness. He would then issue his orders to a spagiric laboratory and so increase the efficiency of the remedies normally in use.

A complete traditional pharmacological system might in this way be brought back into use. Many old customs would suddenly make sense again. Think, for example, of doctors who used to tell patients with liver troubles to eat their soups from a tin spoon.

In the following table will be found a complete list of the correspondences which exist between stars, metals and organs of the human body. As Hippocrates, in *The Nature of Men*, wrote: 'the remedy acts principally on the humour most analogous to its nature; subsequently it attacks and purges the others. The doctor's task is to vary and carefully to manipulate the remedies he uses.

TABLE OF CORRESPONDENTS BETWEEN THE PLANETS, THE METALS AND THE ORGANS OF THE HUMAN BODY

Planet	*Metal*	*Organs and Therapeutic Action*
The Sun	Gold	The Sun, as master of the solar system, governs the whole of life. Gold can thus act on all forms of illness. It is chiefly associated with the blood and circulation, rejuvenation of cells and with the brain.
The Moon	Silver	As a reflection of solar influence, the Moon and Silver also act on the distribution of blood and on the cerebellum. In addition, they influence the digestion (stomach, kidneys and bladder), the humours and the woman's menstrual cycle.
Earth	Antimony	The action here is on the eliminations and self-purifications of the body. The body is rid of toxin and accumulated impurities in preparation for the work of nobler metals. The ancients used tinctures of antimony in this way before undertaking treatment of a higher order.
Mercury	Mercury	Not to be confused with 'the mercury of the philosophers' which is sought in second degree alchemy. General treatment of the nervous system.
Venus	Copper	Treatment of disorders associated with glandular malfunctioning. Infectious diseases transmitted by skin contact.
Mars	Iron	Gall-bladder, organic lesions and disease characterised by inflammation.
Saturn	Lead	The spleen, the skeleton, wasting diseases.

NINE

INTRODUCTION TO PREPARATIONS OF THE SECOND ORDER

The way of the second order is even more mysterious. The alchemist may embark on it once he possesses First Matter which has reached the first degree of perfection.

Most would-be alchemists who read and, like me, are strongly impressed by Cyliani's famous book *'Hermes' dévoilé'*,* do not realise that his starting point is the point which I have now reached—i.e. matter which has already achieved its first degree of perfection. They think that they may immediately embark on the making of mercury and sulphur, themselves only a stage towards the final operation, the conjunction by which the red matter is obtained. This all too common error condemns the enterprise from the outset.

It is now two years since I started working on preparations of the second order, again following instructions which I had received. The first thing to do it to set aside First Matter which has gained its initial crown yet has remained pure—i.e. to which no gold has been added for first order preparations. The process of enriching this pure matter then follows.

* Editions Traditionnelles, Paris.

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to construct more sophisticated apparatus than has previously been required. The crown-shaped joint between the tank containing the First Matter (the mould) and the glass bell where condensation takes place, must be in glazed earthenware, to obviate the possibility of metal interfering in the process.

Work should start when the stars are in a state of 'exaltation', which is to say soon after the new moon in Aries (the sun is in 'exaltation' in Aries and the moon in Taurus). This, to our eyes, is the astrological moment when nature herself stirs into new life, life which becomes increasingly intense from now until summer.

The modus operandi for the first order was continually to add green plants and dew, with alternate moistening and drying, until the stage of blackness was reached—then limitless incineration and regeneration. This time, on the contrary, the natural method is to add only *Blood of the Green Lion*, that is to say decanted dew prepared in a particular way.

The operation will doubtless be very long by this method and I know that some alchemists seek to proceed more quickly by making use of minerals, as advised in certain texts. I have not been permitted to do this. I prepare the Blood of the Green Lion with the utmost precaution, not only in picking the plants in the hour before dawn but also in pounding them up immediately after I have picked them. For this purpose I use a juice-extractor. In this way I obtain, within an hour, a litre to a litre and a half of sap. I leave this to decant *in complete darkness*, using a tall vessel akin to the stem which contained the sap, until the vegetable solids are deposited. This leaves me with a reddish liquor which I draw off with a pipette and place in the vessel containing the matter to be nourished. This decanted sap is the true *Blood of the Green Lion*. The words *Blood of the Lion* evoke the presence of a particularly concentrated force, which was doubtless the intention

of the ancients who first used these symbolic words. If I waited until midday to perform this task the vital forces would certainly have been dissipated and the red water obtained at this time would be valueless. In the same way one would not expect a child fed exclusively on sterile food to thrive.

I wonder, incidentally, whether the alchemical symbolism in which the *Red Lion* devours the *Green Lion* does not correspond quite simply to the ripening of fruit between spring (the Green Lion of Aries) and summer (the Red Lion of Leo), that is to say between the first and second fire signs. By analogy it could also refer to the daily passage of the sun as it climbs from the horizon to its zenith.

Each spring morning, then, I add this sap-liquor to the mixture which I then heat to a temperature not exceeding 50°–55°C. I carefully collect the residue from the evaporation, for this will be used later. The product of this distillation, whose weight and volume are slightly less than those of the liquid initially added, is called the *Virginal Milk*. In taste and smell it is like raspberry. At this stage everything hinges on perceiving the exact moment when the mercury makes its appearance in the still. This mercury is called the *Child*. When this point is reached, the external source of heat is stopped and the internal fire of the mercury is regulated by nourishing it in its turn with the Virginal Milk, once the mercury is separated from the Mother.

It is also said that medicine of the first order comes from the Blood of the Green Lion, that of the second from the Blood of the Red Lion. This statement corresponds to the two stages of nature which I have just indicated. So, in springtime one can obtain richer liquors by steeping the flowers in the first medicine, as detailed in the preceding chapter. The resulting mixtures are then exposed to the sun during its passage in Leo, in the heart of summer. One discovers that at its time of greatest heat, the passage of

the sun effectively colours the exposed liquor *red*. This liquor can be used in subsequent stages of the second degree preparation. The foregoing is only an analogy but I am sure that its significance may be grasped in practice.

This is the stage which I have currently reached, so for the time being I can say no more. The Virginal Milk is a colourless liquid which must be kept in a cool, sheltered place. In it is gradually formed a cotton wool-like substance; in this I can see simply a germ. This water is alive and passes through a whole series of colour changes whose significance I do not yet understand.

Last year, during the three spring months, I was able to proceed in the manner I have described, though I encountered several problems with my heating system. An accident here means a delay of a year for the part affected, for one has to wait for the following spring. This year, 1969, the sap has not been sufficiently rich nor plentiful, because the two eclipses of Aries and the conjunction of the new moon with Saturn coincided with frost damage to the plants on which we were relying. It is therefore not certain that I will arrive this year at the second degree of perfection of the matter. Nevertheless, I discovered with surprise that the part of the matter which was recovered did indeed appear as a black mass, yet one covered with tiny crystals. These formed star-like points, both on the surface and throughout the mass. Tradition leads me to believe that this is the mercury ready to rise from its bed.

From the end of spring 1968 till the beginning of last spring, the matter, resoaked, repulverised and put back into a still with a better heating system, has been constantly nourished. It has been nourished not with sap, of which we did not have any at that time of year, but with Virginal Milk which was obtained in 1968. From the beginning of spring this year I have again been adding sap. The presence of these stars in the matter treated in 1968 doubtless signifies the imminent appearance of the true mercury of the philosophers. According to the tradition, the second

degree of perfection of matter is characterised by what is called the *Star of the Magi.*

To pursue for a moment the symbolic aspect of the subject, why are the *Labours of Hercules* so called? This, you will remember, is the name given to the preliminary tasks of the first degree: nourishing the matter with sap and 'burning' it for a period of several months with dew. The answer is that it is a question of making the best possible use of the rising forces of dew and sap, capturing these forces and through them overcoming the attraction of the earth and, literally, raising up the earth. These daily tasks must be performed before the sun rises too high in the sky. Gardeners grasp something of this when they tend their flowers. The alchemist, too, must both feel it and know it. He must care for his matter as the gardener cares for his flowers or the mother her child.

The question of the external fire must obviously be solved in harmony with that of the internal fire. Otherwise one runs the risk of calcination of the matter. A piece of apparatus must be built which allows proper surveillance and which contains no metal parts—this because of the fragility of the Virginal Milk. Raymond Lully writes: 'Nature has appointed a time for conception, a time for pregnancy and a time for birth. So must the alchemist await the time of birth. When the stone is born, he must *nourish it like a child* until it is able to *sustain the heat of a great fire.*'

It is very difficult for me at the present state of my research to give precise figures either for the quantities or the time needed to complete the operation. Everything depends on the quality obtained, as much in the choice of dew to be extracted—linked with the weather—as in the refinements which the adept introduces as he himself progresses. It is said that *the wings must be raised seven times over*, clearly indicating that there is no way out. Further, it should be remembered that we are here concerned only with the first stage of the second order, that moment at

which the Child must be born and the mercury made to rise out of the waters which enclose it. The ensuing stage is quite separate, for, once the child is born and has been separated from its mother, it must be helped to grow. To this end it is placed in another piece of apparatus which enables it to live in Air, which is to say on gases produced from liquors specially prepared for that purpose. For us, this stage is not yet reached and we cannot speak of it without risk of error.

For the alchemist, it is never enough to follow the instructions he finds in books, however authoritative the books may be. Nature herself is variable and inconsistent and must be observed continually, so that the ravages of unsuitable weather or ill-disposed elements may be corrected. Choosing the right time of day is vital for the yielding of quintessence which is assimilable and which does not poison the best-regulated operation in some way. Metals, like humans, become ill. Saint Thomas wrote as follows to Père Reynald: 'Do not place overmuch trust in the pronouncements of philosophers, whether ancient or modern; the whole art of a good alchemist rests in the intelligence of nature and in the proper carrying-out of experiments.' Thus when the weather is stormy, or has a depressing effect and also during certain phases of the moon, the Blood of the Green Lion will not separate from the green matter. This indicates that the liquor is lacking in energy and, if put in the container, is liable to give rise to unwanted effects. Sap can be compared to blood. We know that cardio-vascular attacks are more common at some periods than at others.

What is more, in reading the philosophers, it is assumed that one has practical knowledge which can only be acquired after a long period of experiment and after overcoming many hurdles. The penalty for lack of knowledge is lack of understanding. You will find phrases like this: '*When the water is transformed into earth*', and again '*until its waters are exhausted*'. The meaning of such

expressions will not be grasped by reading further and yet more complicated texts, nor even by meditation. It will come as a result of work carried out both in nature and in the laboratory. My own method, when doubtful or lacking information over the next stage of an operation, is to wait until the planets are in a favourable configuration for me personally and then to reflect on the question. Further, I always construct an astrological chart of the essential stages of the operation, so that I may see whether the process is evolving in harmony with those planetary cycles which presided over the birth of the Work. As my horoscope clearly shows, Saturn is my guiding influence, condemning me to reach each stage of the operation by the longest and hardest route. On the other hand, Saturn's support is constant and deep-seated. Because of it I have been able to grasp many details which would have been lost in more rapid revelation, and have drawn knowledge and understanding of technique from the mass of symbolism which have proved vital in practice.

For example, I have already shown that when one adds the rich quintessence of the Blood of the Green Lion—which incidentally quickly becomes separated out at the top of the vessel from the impure elements—the quantity of etheric forces yielded up to the distillation is slightly less than the quantity introduced. I came to understand that this disparity was vital, that the germ had appropriated this force to aid its own growth. If you re-use the liquor which is recovered as Virginal Milk, the same results obtain: when passed through the apparatus, it will again yield something of itself. This is what the old alchemists meant when they talked of the water changing into earth and of the waters becoming exhausted. By this means one knows that the germ is alive and is being nourished and that the waters, too, are living, and will remain so until the quantities at the start and at the end of this stage of the operation are found to be the same. When that happens the waters will be dead, having yielded

all their energy. In this way the written word and experience mutually enhance understanding; no real or lasting truth can be reached in any other way.

Influenced at the start of my labours by what I had read in ancient texts, I imagined that the First Matter extracted from the ground had to be nourished like a child and so I used to soak my plants at great length in dew before extracting the juice. I then fed my earth exclusively on this, believing that it could only stand liquid nourishment at this early stage—like a child which at the start is fed only on milk. Today I know that the Child referred to is the germ which is imprisoned in the matter of the *second degree* and whose task is to give birth to the mercury.

Of course I now know that one may proceed more quickly than I have done. One can speed the work up, for instance, by extracting black earth from the hollows of certain trees. One may also use minerals. I do not seek to devalue this alternative method, I say only that it was not my way and that I can claim no knowledge of it. Because it is quicker, it is more finely balanced and one can more easily go astray, particularly if one seeks to simplify alchemy by introducing elements of *chemistry*.

All chemists I have met and who have been interested in alchemy have in the end honestly convinced themselves that the symbolic terminology may be reconciled with the body of knowledge which they command: to take an example, they decide that sulphuric acid is the 'blood of the dragon'. In fact there is in alchemy something known as a 'sulphureous precipitate' but this is something quite different. To obtain it, one needs virginal liquors, to which one adds sulphur (which must be specially chosen). In a water bath, this forms a very useful liquor which may in fact be the 'blood of the dragon' but which is certainly not sulphuric acid, for one may put a drop of it on the tip of the tongue without experiencing any burning effect.

Naturally enough the contacts that I have made and the relations I have entered into with certain firms have

given a fair number of researchers the 'corruption of peat' bug. Believing that the knowledge may be readily given and received, they jump the gun or proceed on a grand scale, sometimes with material gain in view. Instead of taking one or two kilos of earth, they start with 40 or 50, blissfully unaware of the considerable quantity of plants and dew which I had to gather and treat in twelve years' work on a mere kilo and 800 grammes of original matter. Here, as in every operation, the sense of proportion is vital and experience alone has the last word.

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